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MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. JAMES SHERMAN.

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PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY,
PAUL'S WORK.

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Sol. Sherman

MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. JAMES SHERMAN;

INCLUDING AN UNFINISHED

AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

BY

HENRY ALLON.

Second Edition.

LONDON:
JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.
M.DCCC.LXIII.

~~280. c. 67.~~
210. c. 352.

"Servant of God, well done! They serve God well
Who serve His creatures. When the funeral bell
Tolls for the dead, there's nothing left of all
That decks the 'scutcheon and the velvet pall
Save this. The coronet is empty show—
The strength and loveliness are hid below.
The shifting wealth to others hath accrued.
The learning cheers not the grave's solitude.
What's *done* is what remains! Ah, blessed they
Who leave completed tasks of love to stay
And answer mutely for them, being dead!
Life was not purposeless, though life be fled."

Mrs Norton.

"A Christian elected by Christians to preach the gospel is more truly a priest than if all the bishops and popes had consecrated him."

Luther to the German Nobles, 1520.

"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

PREFACE.

In preparing these Memoirs, I comply with the last request of an honoured and beloved friend. The slightest wish of the dying is sacred: the wish of my friend left me no option. Without demur, therefore, I consented to undertake a task, which my great love for him has made a pious joy.

This task, however, has not been an easy one. The materials for its execution were very scant. His character consisted of but few elements, and his life was made up of but few incidents. Besides, except the autobiographical recollections, and apart from his sermons—to which, of course, only passing allusions can be made in this volume—I have found very little record of thought, and very little correspondence possessing interest enough to diversify and enrich the narrative of simple events.

I have consequently felt it impossible to do full justice to Mr Sherman's distinctive excellencies, and to adequately exhibit the true elements of his power.

These Memoirs, therefore, are, in the first place, monumental—a record for the very large circle who personally knew and loved Mr Sherman: in some measure it will serve to perpetuate the fellowship with him of their grateful hearts. They are like a tombstone, or a portrait, upon which the eye of affection may rest, and over which sorrowing love may ponder and weep. A book which has even such a character abundantly justifies itself. Because it is written, it does not follow that the vain thought of the writer must have been, that the world demanded, or will read it. It is enough if, in the circle of a good man's home, or friendship, or church-life, it gratifies affection, and perpetuates the holy influences of personal association.

Mr Sherman's Memoirs, however, will do more than this. Without putting in for him the claim, that in any great or palpable way he moulded the thought or the life of his generation, yet he may be set forth as teaching this one great lesson—one of the greatest that men can learn—that every gift becomes great when greatly consecrated. Few men more largely than Mr Sherman have realised the practical ends of the ministry—the salvation and sanctity of the souls of men. He whose single sermons more than once or twice led scores to penitence and to Christ may well be the envy of even his most intellectually-gifted brethren. If, in the

heavenly firmament, he that "turns many to righteousness shines as the stars for ever and ever," it is no dim lustre that distinguishes the subject of this Memoir before the throne of God and the Lamb. It should, therefore, be no stinted honour that the Church on earth awards to him. Even if this volume recorded only the marvellous successes of his ministry, it were worth our while earnestly and prayerfully to study it, if, haply, we might learn his secret, and emulate his usefulness.

I have to acknowledge the kindness of many helpers, and to express my regret that the publication of the volume has been so long delayed. The multiform and incessant demands of a large pastorate, together with some months of sickness in my family, and the death of an only son, with its disabling and darkening sorrow, must be my excuse. To me, in some respects, the volume will ever be his memorial also.

HENRY ALLON.

CANONBURY, *March* 1868.

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Introductory.

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

"Unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability."

"The best men, doing their best,
Know peradventure least of what they do;
Men usefullest i' the world are simply used;
The nail that holds the wood must pierce it first,
And he alone who wields the hammer sees
The work advanced by the earliest blow."

E. Barrett Browning.

GOD has many ideals of excellence, many types of fitness; men have seldom more than one. Their test of men is a conventional one, constituted by their own predilections or experiences or associations. They form a conception of what a man—an artist, an author, a statesman, or a minister —should be, selecting probably some instance as their type; and they measure all others by this standard, test all others by his qualities, desire that all others should be conformed to him, and pronounce them perfect or imperfect accordingly. But this course is as foolish as it is unphilosophical. It rejects the many for the sake of the few—it condemns variety, and insists upon uniformity—it magnifies one member against the whole body—it generates a morbid dissatisfaction with men and things as the Creator has made them —it narrows the sense of goodness, and quenches all catholic appreciation: those who follow it become sectaries, —none the less mistaken and intolerant because they may have selected an ideal of a noble type.

Were Christian ministers all conformed even to the best model that could be selected, or to the best ideal that could be conceived, such a uniformity would be an incalculable loss to the Church. Its riches consist in diversities of ministerial gifts—in the wonderful law of variety which out of uniform elements produces no two individuals exactly alike.

After his order, John is as perfect as Paul, and Peter as John. The varieties of men's tastes and needs are thus wonderfully met, and the Church is perfectly ministered to by that which every man supplieth. Ministers therefore constitute classes, and the ideal of one class cannot be compared with the ideal of another. They are to be accepted and judged according to the diversity of their gifts, "every man in his own order." The man of patient thought is not to be lightly esteemed because he is not the man of enterprising activity. Nor is the unresting preacher or pastor to be demurred to because he is not the learned student. John Foster is not to be scorned because he did not preach like Robert Hall; nor is Robert Hall to be the less thought of because he does not present to us the profound thinking of John Foster. Each is a type, almost an ideal of a class. Each complements the service of the other, and the Church is richer than it would have been had they been alike. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you."

On this simple principle these memorials of Mr Sherman have been compiled. They claim for him not the excellences which characterise ministers of another class—but a high degree of the excellences which characterise his own. Nor do they presume to judge which type of Christ's ministers is the higher or the more useful—the man of instructive thought, or the man of popular address. Rather may it be said, that the one is very largely made effective by the

other. The philosopher needs the services of the popular expositor—the eloquent preacher those of the scientific theologian.

The memorial of each, therefore, should correspond with his character and life. Mr Sherman belongs to the class of popular preachers, of which in modern times Whitefield may perhaps be regarded as the ideal. Like Whitefield, he was too active a preacher to think very profoundly, or to write very extensively. He was one of the numerous class who to masses of men interpret the theological thought of the scholar and the philosopher. He did not himself dig in the mine of truth for virgin ore—he simply minted and gave currency to that which other men produced. He was contented with the theology that he could use in preaching, and that practically ministered to men's souls.

No claim to intellectual greatness or originality is made for him. He freely and admiringly admitted the superiority of many of his brethren. His inner life was neither profound nor distinctive—it was simply intensely fervent. It did not, therefore, find expression in any records that it would be of service to reproduce. Not only was his life too busy for profound thought, but his intellectual character was not fitted for it. His immense activities were natural and congenial to him. He did not feel the stirrings and yearnings to which some active men have to do violence. He would have felt no relief in profound investigations The sceptical doubt that comes of brooding thought was unknown to him. He looked at everything on its practical side. If he doubted, it was only of himself; never of Christianity. His was the greater blessedness of those who,

"having not seen, yet have believed." He "believed, therefore he spake," and spake with the power and passion of full and undisquieted conviction.

Some men's lives are distinctive and valuable chiefly for what is inward. If they express themselves at all, it is in books or letters—of outward incident there is none. They interest and instruct us by their thoughts about things, and by the history of their thinking. Such lives are fruitful in the minds and hearts of those who peruse them, by quickening thought and enkindling feeling. Other men's lives are chiefly valuable for what is outward. They are distinctively men of action rather than of thought—men of practical enterprise, of laborious, energetic duty. You read only of what they did—you can infer their thinkings only from their doings. Such lives are fruitful in stimulating activities, in "provoking to love and to good works." Our coldness is rebuked by their fervency, our dreamy selfishness by their self-denying activity, our unprofitableness by their great service.

Amongst this class of laborious, useful ministers, Mr Sherman stood pre-eminent, and these memorials of him, therefore, are chiefly records of faithful and successful service. He filled his appointed sphere—employed to the utmost the talents intrusted to him—"served his own generation by the will of God," and then "fell on sleep."

Born in the heart of London, and spending his life chiefly in it, no romance of foreign service pertains to his work—no picturesqueness of rural scenery adorns it; only the stern and often tragic experiences of crowded city life characterise it—only the unresting and multiform activities of a metro-

politan minister and popular preacher diversify it. His was the heroism, not of quiet, patient, unnoticed service, but of crowded, pressing, unthankful toil, amid the sin and misery, the crime and squalor, of one of the lowest populations of this great and awful London;—the brain ever active—the heart ever appealed to—the head and the hand never at rest—one busy day succeeding another, and each protracted far into the night—the seething, surging ocean of unspeakable sin and misery incessantly beating against his house with its unresting waves, and ever casting its terrible burdens and woful wrecks at his feet. To this stern, tragic work the best portion of his life was consecrated, and he did it with "all his heart and soul and strength." He laboured as few have laboured, and with a success that few have achieved.

The reminiscences of which this volume so largely consists are Mr Sherman's recollections of the incidents of his own history. The prominence of his ministerial life, and the fact that such multitudes had listened to his preaching—many of whom (how many who shall say?) "owed their own selves to him"—naturally led him to think that some such memorial of him might be expected. With a simplicity of feeling, therefore, as far removed from all affectation of unworthiness as from all exaggerated self-estimate, he devoted the better days of his last and protracted illness to the preparation of these biographical reminiscences. They were written in Malta in the spring of 1860; when access to memoranda was impracticable, and when his physical strength was much impaired, and the difficulty of writing very great. The later pages, indeed, are written in pencil,

and in characters so tremulous as often to be scarcely legible. They are necessarily, therefore, mere outlines, and as necessarily somewhat superficial. A contemporary diary would have recorded passing impressions and judgments of men and things, and estimates of the forms and tendencies of the life, social and religious, that he saw realising itself around him, which memory does not retain. All that in the few closing weeks of life it can recall is the mere outline of fact; and in an uneventful life like that of Mr Sherman, opinion and feeling are more important and interesting than even fact itself.

Concerning these records, therefore, he says:—

"To give a regular detail of my history would be impossible; for though at first I kept a diary, I found so much of self-adulation in the garb of humility creeping into my daily record, and so much written with the latent view of meeting the eye of others at some distant day, that I found it best for my soul's health, after a few years, to discontinue the practice. The whole of these records were burnt except one MS., which was lost with an old portfolio. Perhaps a resolute fight might have conquered the lion, but from what I can now recollect, the resolution of destruction was arrived at after protracted and mature reflection. The diary has found many advocates. In some instances it has been usefully carried on to the end of life; and we are indebted for much that we know of the workings of the Spirit of God in a few eminent men to their diaries. I am far from thinking a diary injurious to others, but in my case, in early life, it did not seem to advance my spiritual state; and in more mature life, when the oppressive duties of my metropolitan

charge daily kept the brain in active exercise till near midnight, I had no opportunity, if I had felt the inclination, for indulging in such a record.

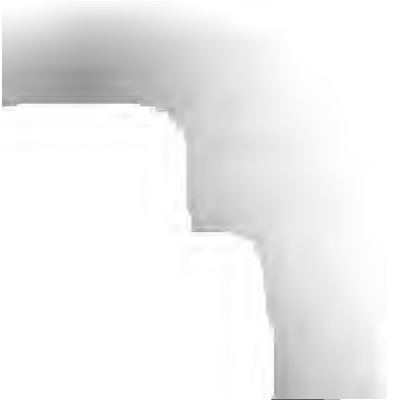
"In some respects this may prove an advantage. Years throw a more solemn light upon the experiences of one's life—the light in which they ought to be presented. With the freshness and vigour of youth, which are most pleasant, there occur so many false estimates of states of mind and early associations, as to make it very desirable that years should correct the exaggerations which almost necessarily intrude themselves from want of experience. However, in my case I can only record present recollections of the more important events of my life, which, from their effect upon my future career, or from the circumstances which surrounded them, made the deepest impression."

Early Years.

"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy;
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy!
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended:
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day."

WORDSWORTH.



CHAPTER I.

In every circle of English life, the proportion of self-made men is very remarkable. This is the noble fruit of our social freedom, the condition of its health, and the earnest of its perpetuity. Healthy life demands perpetual renewal. Institutions maintained by prerogative are simply protected against forces that would purify and strengthen their life-blood. Hence the effeteness of every exclusive aristocracy. Hence the moribund restrictedness of every protected trade. Hence the mediocrity of every prerogative church. Our English aristocracy is perpetually revivified by fresh blood. The lowest born in the land may rise to its ranks. Our English commerce, of which neither guild nor class can claim a monopoly, is full of men who by natural ability have made themselves its princes, and who conduct it with the strength and experience which their successful struggle has wrought in them. Nothing is more common than to find that the head of an establishment was once its shop-boy or porter. Such transitions are the necessity of social law when left to its unrestrained operation. He who has only ability and industry to depend upon will cultivate them to the utmost; while he who has advantages of patronage or capital will naturally depend upon them. And in a free community

power is greater than patronage, and ability to make capital carries a man much farther than capital ready made for him. If left unfettered, the ministry of the gospel will obey this law. God's call to a man to serve Him in the ministry does not disregard his distinctive ability. He may call a Thomas, a Philip, and a Lebbæus, equally with a Peter, a John, and a Paul; but He does not make them equally useful. The men amongst the apostles who laid the foundations of the Church were the men of greatest natural ability. In our English National Church there is but a limited sphere for distinctive natural ability—the law of patronage must ever be fatal to that; if the best man is occasionally found in the highest place, it is not in virtue of the operation of any law. Thousands of parishes are made to feel how much of comparative feebleness patronage protects. Nonconformity has its disadvantages; but amongst its excellences it may fairly boast its unprotected pulpits. As an almost universal rule, its best men do obtain its best positions—they become pastors of the largest churches—they occupy the most influential pulpits, and generally those the most suited to their distinctive capabilities. It is our just glorying, that no family connexions, no power of patronage, lay or clerical, can secure to any man a pulpit for which he is not qualified. Neither can any obscurity of parentage, any social isolation or inferiority, keep a man from gradually and surely rising to whatever position amongst his brethren he may be worthy of occupying. We do not say that there are no exceptions to this law—to what law are there not exceptions?—but the exceptions are very few indeed, and even some of the seeming exceptions are

not real ones: an able man may remain unknown, and may feel as if wrong were done to him, but it will generally be found that his obscurity is from lack of some aptitude which would make his ability effective. For such men—able men, not much fitted either for preachers or tutors—we would gladly see some provision made analogous to the "fellowships" of the Episcopal Church, could we be sure such men would get them if provided.

Nor do we say that there are no disadvantages in the process by which the results of this law of competition are wrought out. In the choice of pastors by Congregational churches, there are things which those who look for ideal church-life would be glad to see altered. There are stern demands upon ministers themselves, which make timid or feeble men shrink—just as feeble and timid men shrink from every other competitive form of life, and helplessly cry for protection. But why should not feeble and timid men shrink? is not this the very excellency of the law? We do not, therefore, hesitate to say, that on the whole it is the law which conduces the most to the general well-being of the Church—keeps it fresh and vigorous, its doctrine scriptural, its morals pure, and its ministry efficient. Ministers exist for churches, not churches for ministers; and whether is it better for the Church and for the world that a feeble minister should suffer, or that by patronage or protection spiritual interests should be sacrificed to his incompetency? "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread."

We feel it, therefore, to be no cause for shame, but rather a glory, that the most eminent men amongst Nonconformists have, as a rule, been self-made men;—self-made, and therefore eminent. So long as our pulpits are unprotected, and our ministers are the voluntary choice of the people, this must continue so; and to the great gain of the churches.

To this class, Mr Sherman belonged—he was a self-made man. His parents were in humble circumstances, residing in the house, No. 1 North Place, Banner Street, Finsbury. His father was in the employ of the East India Company; and the exertions of his mother were necessary to supplement his provision for his family. Both were pious, intelligent people, and greatly respected by all who knew them. A companion of James Sherman's boyhood testifies that they were an example to all their neighbours. They understood the value of a good education; and as James was their only child, they were able to send him to one of the best schools in the locality. This was kept by the Rev. Mr Box, a Baptist minister.

His childhood was spent amid the concentrated affections and pious sanctities of a quiet humble home. The wisdom of his father, the love of his mother, were exhausted upon him; and if from his maturer sensibilities we may infer his early temperament, we may imagine the development and the fondness of his filial affections. In the days of his greatest popularity, he "honoured his father and his mother." His veneration for them attested their goodness and love, and no less his own filial piety. He was "brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Both his parents were professing Christians. His mother loving and anxious—his

father cautious and somewhat reserved, perhaps even a little austere—he was carefully guarded from evil without, and saved from pernicious over-indulgence within.

CHAPTER II.

MR SHERMAN gives the following account of his early years:—

"My parents were comparatively poor, but respectable persons. My father held an inferior situation in the employ of the East India Company, who gave him a pension for life some time before his decease. My mother was a woman of singularly energetic habits—cheerful, affectionate, and persevering. By their joint labours they produced an income which, as I was their only child, enabled them to give me an excellent education, and to afford me privileges which parents with large families and superior incomes could not bestow upon their children.

"My father was brought to decision for God under the ministry of the Rev. John Newton of St Mary Woolnoth, though the seeds of piety were sown in his heart by my mother, during the period of their courtship. By her he was entreated to hear the gospel fully preached on the Sabbath. 'The gospel,' he replied; 'why, are not the Epistle and Gospel read in the church every Sunday?' However, at last she prevailed upon him to hear Mr Newton, whose preaching was so different from anything that he had previously heard, and the way of a sinner's salvation was so clearly pointed out, that he be-

came alarmed for his safety, and no longer required urging to attend. He has told me that the Collects and Epistles, which he was obliged to learn every Monday when a boy at school, now became of infinite service to him, for they stored his mind with two important helps. The Collects furnished him with phrases for prayer, always suitable to his case, and the Epistles confirmed the statements of truth and duty preached by Mr Newton. To this mental furniture I attribute his power in prayer, and the select and charming expressions always occurring to him, which, to educated ears, raised them above the ordinary and vapid current phraseology. He was dignified in his mien, slow and stately in his gait; not talkative, but when on any subject he gave his opinion, it was marked by wisdom. His reading had been limited, confined chiefly to works on theology, but he was 'mighty in the Scriptures,' and had great polemical skill; putting his sentiments into terse, strong language, against which an ordinary opponent had but little chance. He would have made a fine old Puritan. He was chosen president of a little band of good men, who met daily in the hour allowed for dinner, after the meal was finished, to read the Scriptures and to pray together. In the evening of the day, when we sat round our cottage fire, he would recite the subjects, controversies, and incidents of that hour, which interested me, as a boy, very much, and helped to create in me a love for those things, which were made part of the pleasures of that home. He was an admirable letter-writer, and was often employed by others, to plead their cause with offended relatives, or to solicit relief, or to offer condolence to sufferers. The father of the present Deputy-Judge Payne,

when confined by an accident from which he never recovered, told me, that of all the numerous letters of condolence which he received in that time of sorrow, there was not one that he prized so highly as that of my father, for its admirable diction and glowing religious sentiments. He was orderly, and punctual to his engagements, especially in the worship of God's house. Woe to me if he had to wait for me—I was sure to receive a lecture on the value of time, and on the influence of my example.

"My mother's piety manifested itself to me in a different way. She loved to trace the goodness of God to herself in the steps of His providence, and in His calling her, when left an orphan, to the 'fellowship of his dear Son.' Streams of tears would flow down her cheeks as she wrought upon her own affections by stories of divine love, while I sat and listened, wondering whether I should ever have such marks of the Divine favour to relate. Once she related to me the story of her own conversion. She was brought up at Osbaldwick, a village a few miles from York. After her parents died, she was placed in the city of York. The lady and her family with whom she lived regularly attended the Cathedral. One Sabbath my mother accompanied her. In the Lesson for the day the passage occurred, 'The soul that sinneth it shall die.' It was fastened, by the good Spirit of God, upon her heart. Sin appeared to her in a light that she never beheld it in before. Her whole life was brought before her; and though, by those who knew her, her general deportment would have been considered moral and religious, she saw in herself a want of sincere love to God and to His service, which she thought a crime above every other. Dis-

tressed with a sense of God's displeasure, she looked in vain to those around her for instruction. They did not understand her mental struggles, but attributed them to bodily infirmity. After months of anxiety and grief, the Rev. Mr Richardson, one of the canons of the Cathedral, read, as the first Lesson, the 36th chapter of the book of the prophet Ezekiel. When he came to the 25th verse, he paused to give the words emphasis, and, as she thought, looked at her as he read, with deep feeling, 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.' A new thought took possession of her soul, that to renew her heart was God's work, and that He was willing to perform it. Her eye was turned to His hand, and her heart clung to His promise, and the cloud of sorrows was broken. 'God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shone into her heart, to give her the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' Mr Richardson ascended the pulpit, and preached from the text, 'Daughter, go in peace; thy faith hath saved thee;' from which he opened up the nature of evangelical forgiveness—its freedom and fulness in Christ Jesus through His atonement. That sermon was the sealing time of the Divine Spirit, and she returned home with the assurance that God for Christ's sake had forgiven her. Her detail, however, embraced points of interest,

and enlarged on circumstances, which cannot now be given, but the whole seemed to pass before her with as much vividness as if it had happened only yesterday; and as she concluded her narrative, overcome by her emotions, she smothered my face with kisses and tears, and said, 'Oh, my boy, the stones would cry out against your mother if she did not love Jesus Christ!'

'I no more at Mary wonder
Dropping tears upon the grave,
Earnest asking all around her,
"Where is He who died to save?"

'Dying love her heart attracted,
Soon she felt its rising power;
He who Mary thus affected
Bids His mourners weep no more.'

Although extremely different in their dispositions, and each, at times, exhibiting the common infirmities of human nature, they were a loving, happy couple, admirably suited to each other: the calm, sober, decided habits of my father checking the generous, rapid, and exuberant affection of my mother, while her warmth and energy roused and stimulated into action his noblest qualities. Happy the lad who is blessed with such parents!"

CHAPTER III.

"I WAS born on Feb. 21, 1796, and was considered a weakly child. The nurse prophesied that I should not live a month. 'If he does,' said my mother, 'I will give you a

dinner of roast beef and plum-pudding.' And as I did live a month, and the nurse did feast on the promised fare, she found it convenient to prophesy again, that less than six months would see me in my grave; but as I survived this second period also, my mother welcomed her then, and on every returning birthday, for a period of fifteen years, until she died. When bread was eighteen or twenty pence the loaf, and every article of food and clothing exorbitantly dear, it was with some difficulty that persons with small incomes could make a respectable appearance, and keep out of debt. Those who, like my parents, determined never to owe anything, were obliged to make many sacrifices. A little touch of maternal vanity, which my mother related some years after, shewed the depth of her love. Lace, then made only by bobbins, was very expensive; but she wished her boy to have some round his cap, and she determined to work extra hours until she obtained it. My orderly, steady father, who seldom exceeded five minutes of his regular hour for retiring to rest, wondered that for several nights she was unusually late. She found some excuse which satisfied him; but when she bought the lace, and trimmed the cap, and exultingly shewed her boy to him crowned with the labours of her hands, all his Puritanical notions gave way. He thought that the child looked quite handsome; and, chucking him under the chin, and kissing the mother, he exclaimed, 'Well, you are a kind wife.' Bless the memory of her kind heart! I was about fourteen years old when she told me this story, and I well remembered how I vowed that, if ever I had the opportunity, I would decorate her brows with the best lace that I could buy.

"I was sent for education to Mr Box, a rigid Baptist minister of the 'Hyper' School, and a strict communionist. His severity, even to his own sons, was fearful—the birch, the rule, the cane, were unsparingly used. Yet he succeeded, I believe by the severity of his discipline, in raising a most flourishing school. The boys feared his authority, and could not evade his inspection. It seemed as if his eyes were everywhere; there was no favouritism. He gave, however, unmistakable hints, that those boys ought to be cared for the best whose parents sent him presents at Christmas. But I never could discern any difference in their treatment. I was afterwards sent to the Rev. Thomas Fancourt's, of Hoxton Square. This was a very superior school, and its master was a very conscientious and painstaking man with the boys. I had to run a race in French with another boy, who, in spite of all my efforts, managed to keep the first place in the class; but I never lost the second. The progress which I made in every department gained me approbation from the masters, and I left the school as well furnished as most boys of my age at that time. The influence of Mr Fancourt's unostentatious piety ran through all the arrangements of the school, and all his dealings with the boys. Though strict, and sometimes severe, he assigned such good reasons for his discipline as generally satisfied all but the offenders.

"At home, Saturday evening was always devoted to preparation for the Sabbath. Newton's hymn, beginning—

> 'Safely through another week,
> God has brought us on our way,'

was a great favourite, and was generally sung, unless some special circumstance, which was always judiciously improved,

demanded a change. My father had an excellent voice, and managed it well. To my mother all tunes were nearly alike; yet she managed to follow so as not to spoil the harmony. The recollection of these little preparatory services, even now, causes my heart to glow with gratitude.

"As I was designed for trade, and had no predilection for any particular business, it was a source of great anxiety to my godly parents, as it has been to thousands, how to dispose of their son. After many fruitless inquiries, and efforts to obtain for me a situation in some pious family, I was almost hopelessly apprenticed to an ivory-turner. He was a man of some religious profession, but soon after I was bound, he cast off all fear of God. His wife was a narrow-minded, unfeeling kind of woman, not calculated to win the heart of a youth, nor likely to befriend him in his career. I received nothing from both but ungenerous treatment, not to say ill-usage. The food was not very good, and was often insufficient. The hours of labour were from six in the morning until eight in the evening, and often later. Except the festivals of Christmas-day, Good Friday, and Easter Monday, I do not recollect ever having or asking for a holiday. But as my father had made an arrangement that I should always spend my Sundays at home, that privilege seemed a compensation for many a day and week of almost insupportable fatigue. This arrangement, too, kept up a regular attendance at the house of God, and religious intercourse with my parents, whose conversation, even when I was unconverted, was never ungrateful to my spirit. On a Saturday evening I was generally sent to the warehouse with the chessmen and balls made during the week, and as the way

was past my father's door, I generally, by additional haste, contrived to get time to run in; and as surely as I did so, there was a basin with a cover on the hob, which always caught my eye, containing some nice preparation for a hungry lad, made by his thoughtful and loving mother. To her I poured out a heart often very sorrowful, but striving to struggle on, and always found sympathy and encouragement and hope from her gracious lips; for the 'law of kindness' was eminently 'in her tongue.' My chief trouble was continual deception on the part of my master—fair promises of reward when a certain amount of work was realised, which were never fulfilled.

"In the first year of my apprenticeship, it pleased God, in the riches of His grace, to open the eyes of my understanding concerning my state before Him, and my need of the salvation of the gospel. From my earliest years I can remember earnestly praying to God to 'give me His grace,' when I scarcely knew what it meant. The Spirit of God, I doubt not, put that petition into my childish mind. I grew up with great respect for religion, sincere regard for the people of God, and reverence for His day and worship. Once I was nearly drawn aside by a thoughtless young man, older than myself, who induced me to stroll to Wandsworth with him on the Sabbath. His conversation was very sceptical in its tendency, and his arguments for employing the Sabbath in pleasure very tempting to a youth shut up all the remaining days of the week. But on my return home, my good father stood up with decision for God, and for His day. He overwhelmed me with remonstrances about my consecration to God in baptism, the care which had been shewn in

my training for Him, asking me whether I would now desert the God of salvation, and blast the dearest hopes of my parents. At the time I thought him severe, but reflection convinced me that he was right, and from that hour I determined that I would not desecrate God's day.

"Not long after this, I went, as I was accustomed to do, to the Tabernacle. Mr King, of Doncaster, was then supplying the pulpit. In the course of his sermon, he quoted with great force the question of Job, 'How should man be just with God?' No doubt, I had heard the question proposed before, but now it came with a new force. I had, from my infancy, been accustomed to hear about justification with God, but its applicability to my own case was never felt before. I went home thoughtful; sin appeared to me 'exceeding sinful.' The feeling grew for weeks and months. I entertained no hope of mercy. My parents observed the change, and tried to discover the cause, but the fear lest they should think me acting the hypocrite to gain their approbation effectually closed my lips. One Sunday evening, when detained at home by indisposition, my mother said, 'Your father and I cannot help noticing your depression, your love for religious reading, and your devout attention at the house of God, and we hope, my dear boy, that God has, by His Spirit, "begun a good work" in your soul, and that our prayers for you are receiving their answer.' I could reply to her only by my tears. Day by day I read the Scriptures to see if God spake to me by His promises, but no promise brought *me* relief. They seemed suitable enough for others, but there was always suggested to my mind, that there was some peculiarity in my case, especially that I was the son of

godly parents, and that I had so sadly abused or neglected my privileges—so that I could very seldom retain hope for any length of time. The law did indeed appear unto me spiritual, but I was 'carnal, sold under sin.' If ever I have prayed in my life, it was during that period. I wrestled with God, feeling as if I must obtain relief, or perish at His mercy-seat. Oh, the mental agonies that I endured! It seemed as if every sin was brought to my recollection, and charged upon my conscience. When I heard preachers say, 'How easy it was to believe the grace and love of God,' I have said in my heart,—'You have never been tied and bound with the chain of your sin, and have never heard the terrible indictment of the law of God in your conscience, and have never had the terrors of the Lord, like the thunders of Sinai, resounding in every chamber of your soul, or you would not tell sinners how easy it is to believe.' Sure I am, that until He who shews the sinner his condemned state sheds light upon his despairing mind, so that he sees 'the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,' he cannot believe the love that God has towards him.

"But the day of deliverance drew nigh. After twelve months, Mr King came again to preach at the Tabernacle. I had heard him in the morning of the Sabbath, but found no relief. After dinner I retired, and with intense earnestness pleaded with God that He would seal my pardon, and assure me of my justification. After tea, I started to Tottenham Court Road Chapel, where Mr King was to preach that evening. All the way, I watered the pavement with my tears, and sent up my cries to heaven. The text was very suitable: 'Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that

through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.' I heard with emotion, and with some pleasure; and yet my faith did not seem sufficiently strong to bring home to myself the blessing. With a spirit of supplication, similar to that with which I had come, I bent my steps homeward. As I was crossing from Bedford Square to Montague Place, I seemed to hear a voice saying to me, 'I am thy surety.' I involuntarily turned round, half imagining that some one was speaking to me. After a moment's pause, I said to myself, 'It is the voice of my Saviour.' And a flood of light was poured into the prison-house of my poor, dejected, deserted, and half-despairing soul, and at once converted it into the temple of God. His suretyship appeared so clear in the Scripture, so glorious to the justice of God, and so full of mercy to me, that then and there I felt that God did literally 'blot out my sins as a cloud;' and I went home rejoicing in His love. Not more surely did the thief on the cross or Mary in the garden hear the Saviour's voice than did James Sherman. Oh, the peace, the gratitude, the joy that followed! I seek not to explain it: 'God's ways are not our ways.' I seek not to justify it: it requires no justification from me. But I glorify Him, for so dealing with a poor, broken heart. Since that blessed hour I have often thought, If the stones of London could speak, what tales of human experience they could tell, of wrestling with God, of refreshing consolations from His Word, and of deliverance from temptation by His Spirit! In the bustle and hurry of passing crowds in the streets, we little think what is passing between them and their Father in heaven, or what is indicated by countenances cast down with sadness or glowing

with joy. Many a blessing, which no gold could buy, has been striven for, and brought from heaven, in the midst of its busy commerce; many a victory over sin and Satan, greater than any that Tower guns could celebrate, has been achieved in silent hearts. Blessed be God for the ministry of angels, but, above all, for the communion of His Spirit!

"For several months, my 'joy in the Lord' was unabated, and a loving spirit of obedience controlled my will. To serve and please God was both a duty and delight. Though I had for some time known the power of prayer, its sweetness now drew me nearer to God. Of course, those around me soon perceived the change, for the joy of my heart often manifested itself in songs of grateful emotion. God had, however, designed me for work in His Church, and trials awaited me which were to prepare me for it. 'It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth;' and God was pleased to discipline me by both internal and external sorrows, and I learned obedience to the Divine will as much by the things that I suffered as by the doctrines that I believed.

"With my decision for God came persecution from those who wrought in the same room with me, who were all opposed to religion. My master saw the effects of Divine grace upon my general character, and disliked me the more. Never very strong, my health gave way under excessive labour and insufficient food. Satan, too, had begun to suggest doubts about the reality of my conversion, as being unusual and questionable both as to its manner and its effects; and although generally able to withstand his assaults, yet in moments of extreme bodily weakness, he gained the mastery; but this was preparatory to usefulness in Christ's Church."

CHAPTER IV.

"ABOUT the age of sixteen, I began to feel strong impressions that it was my duty to give myself up to Christ; to invite sinners to His cross. At first I treated it as a suggestion common to ardent young men; but it was not to be so easily dismissed. In my sleep I sometimes dreamed that I was preaching to large congregations—at other times, that men upbraided me for my presumption, and opened the pulpit door that I might come down to my proper position, and be taught by those who knew the gospel, and understood how to communicate it to others. On a few occasions, my soul was so filled with joy in announcing the grace and glory of Christ, that I wept with grateful emotion. Preaching seemed not only easy, but the most delightful of all duties. These, however, were exceptions to the general state of my feelings, which was of the most despondent character. I had a very treacherous memory. I had no suitable preparatory training. I had no ability to express myself clearly on any topic, and a conviction that, if I made the attempt, I should fail, and bring dishonour upon an office for which, in my own apprehension, I was utterly unqualified. Still the desire grew upon me night and day; and as I had no means of judging what the will of God was but by prayer, being afraid if I told any one the workings of my heart that I should be laughed at as an enthusiast, I earnestly and with many tears besought Him, that by some means or other He would make known to me His mind, whether I should be His servant in the gospel of His Son or not. One day

the conflict between hope and despair amounted almost to agony, and in the depths of my distress I cried, 'O my God, my God, if Thou hast designed me for the work of the ministry, I beseech Thee apply some portion of Thy word to my soul, that may give me confidence that it is Thy will that I should undertake it, or if not, that I should banish it from my thoughts.' I believed that God would answer my prayer; for it seemed as if dictated by His good Spirit, and I felt that in presenting it I sought His glory. On the following Sunday morning I took my Bible to read a portion of it before I went to the sanctuary. Providentially, and, as I believe, directed by Him who separates to Himself men for the ministry, I began the book of Jeremiah. When I came to the 4th verse, I read, 'Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying,' &c., to the 9th verse. How precious to me was that everlastingly-to-be-remembered moment! The prophet exactly described the emotions of my previously desponding soul: 'Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.' Everything that I wanted seemed contained in those verses:—a clear call to the work of preaching—a precise description of my own incapability, 'a child' in knowledge, talent, and timidity—a promise of help, and the earnest of it—and ultimate success whatever impediments might lie in my path. Nothing, O my Lord and Master, could be more appropriate, nothing could be more encouraging. Who and what was I, to be favoured with so clear and satisfactory a call to my heart and understanding, when many are perpetually exercised with fears lest they should have entered upon the responsible work

uncalled and unsent? Accept the humble adoration of a grateful soul, who for forty-five years has realised that commission, and has experienced the fulfilment of Thy promised help.

"Satisfied that God had designed me for the ministry, I was still greatly perplexed how I should obtain the needful qualifications and preparation; miraculous help I could not expect, and human means seemed utterly hopeless. Money I had none. I had served less than four years of my apprenticeship, and there was not the remotest chance that my master, who now found my services very profitable to him, would release me from my bonds, especially as I became more profitable to him every year. But He to whom I had committed my way knew how to deliver His servant. It pleased Him to smite me with fever. For some time the symptoms were very threatening; but though much reduced by its terrible influence, my reason was spared, and during six weeks, while confined to my bed, I had unusual fellowship with God. That bed, like Jacob's, for it was not much softer, was often 'the gate of heaven.' What intercourse with God, prevented at other times by business or the thoughtlessness of health, was now granted to a youth whom few knew or cared for. While musing upon past mercies which had been showered upon me, my faith grew very strong, and I was enabled to take hold of God's strength for help and deliverance. In the midst of this Divine communion, that passage of Scripture was applied to my soul with unspeakable power: 'O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?' The answer rose to my lips

without a moment's hesitation: 'My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut these lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me.' And from that moment, although the path of deliverance was as dark as ever, I retained the fullest confidence, that by some means unknown to me God would emancipate me. As soon as I was able to bear removal, I went home. After the first night at home, I told my dear mother that I should not remain long with my master. Supposing that I meant that I should speedily die, she tried to cheer and comfort me with the earnest of returning health.

"'No,' I said, '"I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord." I shall in some way or other be released from my master, and become a minister of Christ.'

"'You do not intend wilfully to leave him, and thus to bring additional grief upon yourself and us, do you?'

"'No, but you will see God's hand in my freedom, as clearly as Israel saw it when they had crossed the Red Sea.'

"'Well, my dear, do you think that you have any talents for the ministry?' asked my anxious and conscientious mother.

"'No, the thought of my incapacity distresses me beyond measure; yet of this I am sure, that God has called me to the work, and I hope that He will furnish me with qualifications.'

"It was the Sabbath morning when this conversation took place, and my father was at the sanctuary. As soon as he returned, and while I was lying down in another room, I heard my mother say to my father:—

"'I fear that a terrible trouble is coming upon us. I

fear that James's head is affected; he talks of leaving his master and entering the ministry.'

"'So,' said my father, coming into my room, 'I learn from your mother that you are thinking about entering the ministry.'

"'Yes,' I replied; 'and though I see no hope from myself or from man, yet I believe that God will release me from my bondage, and cause me to proclaim His gospel.'

"'Well,' said he, fearing to excite me, 'do nothing rashly; bring no dishonour upon yourself, by any attempt to release yourself from your present bondage; but remember two things—first, that the ministry is an awfully responsible work; and next, that when God calls a man to it, He does not lay hands upon a novice. I would rather a thousand times see you in the humblest position of life than a minister of the cross, if you are not called to it and fitted for it.'

"After this conversation, I never again ventured to mention the subject to them, or to any human being, until my deliverance was effected. Nor did they mention it, as they were filled with fears respecting my impressions, and thought that time would wear them away.

"My weakness continued, so that if I attempted to resume labour I became worse. My master saw that for the present at least all hope of his gain through me was gone. I became almost an infant in feebleness; and as this had continued for nearly three months without any permanent amendment, my case looked serious in his eyes as well as in my own. From what transpired afterwards, it appeared that his mind had been tormented by the fear that he would

have to provide for me, while my labour would bring him no return. This became a source of exquisite anxiety to his covetous mind. To find fault with me was useless, for he saw my weakness in my pallid face and almost fleshless limbs. In this state of mind he one day met my father.

"'I fear,' said he, 'that James is very ill, and never will be able to do much work, at least for a great length of time.'

"'He is ill,' said my father, 'and until the cause is removed, will get worse.'

"'Do you think so?'

"'I do; I believe that he will die, if he remains with you.'

"'Then,' said my master, not sorry to have my father's warrant for what he had previously been thinking about, 'if that is your belief, I will give up his indentures.'

"'Very joyfully,' replied my father, 'will he and I accept them. When shall he leave you?'

"'On Saturday next.'

"My father wrote to inform me of the joyful news, which, although it was the answer to my prayer, and the reward of my confidence, seemed too good to be true. On the Saturday I packed up my little all, and left him. He was moved at my departure, shook my hand, wished me well, and hoped that if I did regain my strength, I would return to him. I thanked him, but felt no inclination to give him the promise. When I reached home, my parents received me with the greatest joy, but they saw only my release from oppression and affliction—they did not see my deliverance with my eyes, as the prelude to the glorious work of the ministry.

"I can never forget the triumphant air with which, after

visiting my master and securing the cancelling of the indenture, my father returned to his cottage that night. All that he said, as he sat down and covered his face with his hands, was, 'You are free.' It was a very unusual thing for him to weep, but tears started to his eyes, and rolled slowly down his cheeks, as he raised his head and kissed me, and said, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.' Then after relating to us what had passed, he said, 'Now let us bow our knees and bless the Deliverer;' and he poured out his soul in thanksgiving, until we were all melted to tears, and then he fervently prayed for me, that 'the Deliverer would become the Director and Protector of the lad, blessing him with qualifications for any work or duty to which He might call him.' When we rose from our knees, we sang Mr Medley's hymn—

'Now in a song of grateful praise.'

"To me it was 'a night much to be remembered,' the recollection of which has always inspired and comforted me. God had listened to the prayers of a poor apprentice, and had come down to deliver him. I learnt that the 'hearts of all men are in His rule and governance, and that He can dispose and turn them as seemeth best to His godly wisdom.' Oh, how much better it is 'to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes!' May I ever honour Him by believing in His power and loving-kindness!"

Mr Sherman's fellow-apprentice, the son of his master, is still living, and testifies to the substantial accuracy of these recollections. He describes Mr Sherman, senior, as a very

quiet, good man, but very positive. He died at Stepney many years afterwards, in one of two houses given him by his son. He describes young Sherman as being at that time a tall dark youth, of handsome countenance and medium stoutness, skilful in drawing, and as having received a good English education. He was not a sharp lad generally, but was very steady and very quiet at his work, and worked very hard, being very attentive to his duties during the early part of his apprenticeship. He suffered from relaxation of the throat, and after three and a-half years, he was laid aside by it.

During his apprenticeship, bread was very dear,—fifteenpence per loaf, mutton a shilling per pound,—and the two apprentices fared very badly, rarely getting enough to eat. They got meat only three times a-week. He never liked his master, who was a very odd-tempered man, and would speak very harshly to him, and who, although he would talk about religion, "never felt the power of it."

Young Sherman, according to the testimony of his fellow-apprentice, was a great reader, especially of the Bible, which he would diligently peruse at his meals. He was, from the beginning of his apprenticeship, a serious youth, and would often pray in bed, and sing until he fell asleep. He used to sing while at his work, especially the lines—

> "Oh, to grace how great a debtor
> Daily I 'm constrain'd to be."

And with glowing fervour he would conclude—

> "Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter
> Bind my wandering heart to thee."

"When by ourselves," continues his fellow-apprentice, "we talked principally about religion; he was not one to say

much about religion before others. Years after, when I was walking with him, and he talked to me about my religious state, I told him that I wanted to get a clearer view. He said, 'Read your Bible, and pray much, and you will get a clear view.'"

Mr Sherman's narrative continues:—

"The next day was Sunday; it was indeed a Sabbath, a day of resurrection, freedom, and joy. But although I was free, many difficulties pressed upon me. The first and greatest was the continued opposition of my parents to my entering the ministry. And yet no path in business seemed to open out for me, although my father tried every gate where he thought I might gain an entrance.

"Some time previously, I had become a member of the church at Pell Street, under the ministry of the Rev. Robert Stodhart,* who at that time was a very powerful preacher, and a very successful minister of the gospel. He took a fancy to me, and as his house was at Islington, and he generally walked home after preaching, I often had the privilege of walking the greater part of the way with him. Soon after my emancipation, one bright moonlight night, while enjoying a free and happy conversation, we had arrived at the City Road; and turning round to me, he inquired, rather abruptly—

"'Sherman, have you ever had any thoughts of the ministry?'

"'What,' said I, 'has led you to ask such a question?'

* Previously to this, the family had attended the ministry of the Rev. J. Latchford, in Bartholomew Close.

"'Well, I thought it possible; have you?—tell me.'

"'I will,' I replied, 'provided that you will not repeat what I say.'

"He promised that he would not, and I related the circumstances of what I believed to be my call, and those of my recent deliverance. Though a tall, rough man, above six feet high, and not very easily moved, he was evidently affected by the recital, and stretching out his long arm towards the moon, he said, 'Sherman, your path into the ministry is as clear as the shining of that moon.'

"'I wish that I could see it,' I replied.

"'You will ere long, never fear; have you any relatives who can help you?'

"I told him that my parents could not, and though an aunt might do something, if I asked her, I would rather be independent, if I could.

"He invited me to his house to confer on the matter, and arranged that I should pray, at the prayer-meeting, on the following Friday. I told my father of this interview, but although he was pleased, he remained unmoved. I went to the prayer-meeting, and it was the first time that I had opened my lips in public. My nervousness, and the very preparation that I had made, so fettered and confused me, that I broke down in the middle, and was obliged to conclude prematurely.

"'Well,' said my father, on my return home, 'how did you succeed?'

"'Oh, I broke down entirely.'

"'Now,' replied he, 'is not this a sufficient proof that you are not qualified for the ministry? Do you not think that, as

Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, he may have been the author of those impressions which you believe to be a call?'

"I could not help replying, notwithstanding my discouragement, 'No, father; as certainly as I stand here, I believe that God has called me to the ministry of His Son, and that you will live to hear me preach.'

"'Well, my lad,' said my father, 'I tremble lest you should be deceived; but, if I could see those talents in you which would justify such a hope, I should rejoice, above all things, to behold you a minister; but I will oppose your wishes no longer.'

"Nor did he; every effort that he could make to realise them was made, yet nothing, either on his part or on mine, seemed to succeed. My minister forgot his proposition to me about entering Cheshunt College, or, perhaps, was discouraged at my failure at the prayer-meeting. My efforts to get into business failed, though I sincerely did my best. Nothing could be more gloomy than my prospects; and yet my faith did not fail for a moment. I believed that God would eventually open a door for me, and bid me enter. For some months, I became junior teacher in a school; but, although my assiduity and punctuality appeared to give satisfaction, this also was a failure. My father, who was then a member of the same church as I was, waited upon Mr Stodhart, and told him of my wishes and efforts. He entered with some interest into the matter, but forgot all about it soon after. About twelve months after I had left my master, Mr Stodhart called me to him one Sabbath morning, and told me that I must answer certain questions,

which he put into my hand, and that I must appear before the committee of Cheshunt College the following week. I was treated with great courtesy and kindness, was received as a student, and told that I was expected to occupy my room at the College on the following Monday.

"Thus the goodness of God to His poor servant was manifested, and our little family once more bent the knee in thanksgiving. These little incidents may appear trivial, but they were the turning-points of my whole life, and must ever be to me sources of deep interest and grateful feeling."

CHAPTER V.

It must be borne in mind that these are the reminiscences of childhood and boyhood by a man of sixty-five, and that the incidents which they narrate are imbued with the imaginative sentiments with which we always recall the experiences of our youth, and especially such experiences as, however simple and commonplace in themselves, may have been introductory to a great change of destiny, or a career of great usefulness. The light of after successes is reflected upon them, and they seem to have a character very different from that with which they would have been invested had they ended differently.

Commonplace events, again, are really more instructive than exceptional ones. The true life of the most ordinary mortal, faithfully written, were the most instructive of all studies. Exceptional lives are not examples to us—common lives are.

The things which all men do and experience are worthy of all men's study. One life of this kind may be the lesson of all lives.

One cannot read the narrative of Mr Sherman's apprenticeship, confirmed as it is by the son of his master, without feeling sad at the thought of the miseries of thousands like him, who, full of sensibility, and fresh from the tenderness of home, are subjected to hard, unsympathising, irresponsible men. The life of an apprentice is oftentimes a sore martyrdom. Oppression may go a long way before it becomes legally tangible. An apprentice has no refuge from an evil master. A master has all the absoluteness of a parent without his affection. An apprentice has all the obligations of a servant without his freedom. There is but little check upon the inordinate cupidity or the capricious tempers of which an apprentice is often the victim. Young lads in the fresh sensibility of their boyhood are crushed and broken, and made the reckless, brutal men that we see in too many of our workmen; or else, in the most trying stage of their growth, their strength is overtaxed, insufficient food is given to them, and they become stunted or disabled men. At the same time, it is likely enough that a lad like James Sherman, full of indefinite yearnings and imaginings, liking books, and dreaming of the ministry, would not make a very useful apprentice. The racer will not be very effective in the mill. His work was manifestly very irksome to him. Nor would any kindness of treatment, probably, have made him take to it lovingly. This was neither his fault nor that of any one else. He was endowed with a mind and a temperament altogether unsuited to any form of industry which his

position seemed likely to secure. Just as, in the higher circles of life, some men are born with sympathies fitted rather for the stable or the workshop; so in the lower circles of life, men are born with capabilities and sympathies for pursuits apparently beyond their reach. In such cases jarring and misery must ensue—a yearning and a struggle after some other than the position in which they are born, and the chafing and suffering which rebellion against it causes. Happily, in English society, where all pursuits are open to all who will or can engage in them, these longings tend to realise themselves, and the good providence of God will very often fulfil the desires of a man's heart. But, in fairness to the master, this incongruity and discontent of the apprentice, conscious or unconscious, must be taken into the account when we read such a recital as Mr Sherman gives us. A man of dull, unimaginative soul, whose conceptions and aspirations never go beyond ivory-turning, will utterly fail to understand an imaginative, enthusiastic lad like James Sherman, and will probably find him not worth much as an apprentice. A plodding, skilful ivory-turner would hardly have made a popular preacher; nor would a youth with such qualities of a popular preacher in him, however docile and industrious, have made a very good ivory-turner. There were probably, therefore, faults on both sides. The master, probably, was more excusable than he seems, and the apprentice less so.

One cannot fail to observe in this account of Mr Sherman's early years, especially in the narratives of his conversion and call to the ministry, a slight tendency to what, in its full development, we should call fanaticism. The im-

pression upon his mind, in both instances, manifestly was, that there was something supernatural in God's dealings with him. Nor, although he narrates these things in the last year of his life, does he say one word to intimate that the impression of the youth was different from that of the man. Many imaginative youths, of fervid, impulsive temperament, and under the excitement of strong religious feeling, will so interpret their early religious experiences; but the cooler judgment of the man will correct this, and, while recognising God's loving providence, and the leadings of His gracious Spirit, will yet harmonise these with the ordinary experiences of life, and with the ordinary means of grace. Mr Sherman evidently thought that there was something exceptional in his case, in the assurance of acceptance with God which came to him as he was returning from Tottenham Court Road Chapel, and in the strong conviction that, somehow or other, he would be released from his apprenticeship, and directed into the ministry. And the feeling that thus interpreted his agitated thoughts and emotions on these eventful occasions was characteristic of him through life—tinged all his conceptions, suffused his preaching, and gave to it no little of its peculiar inspiration and power.

The question, What is the kind of evidence of our acceptance with God which we may expect, and upon which we can rely? is a very important one—a question with which ministers have to deal, and from which they have to remove misconception in almost every case of conversion. Nothing is more common than for those who seek salvation to be expecting supernatural impressions—that in some way or other they will suddenly feel forgiven—that an impression

will be made upon them that is altogether unmistakable, "the Spirit witnessing with their spirit that they are children of God." An important distinction is to be made between the assurance that God has forgiven me my sins, and the consciousness that God has created within me a clean heart. The first question that an awakened sinner asks is, "Has God forgiven my sins?" And it is clear that his own consciousness cannot answer that question. No impressions or feelings of his own can tell him whether the holy God has pardoned his past transgressions. He can be assured of this only by God's own declarations. He reads, "He that believeth," that puts his trust "in Christ, shall be saved;" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." He interprets these declarations as meaning that God forgives every sinful man who puts his trust in Christ—"whom God sets forth as a propitiation for sins that are past;" and that whosoever comes to Christ, and puts a simple and entire trust in Him for the forgiveness of his sins, is forgiven—forgiven the instant that he trusts. If, then, his own consciousness tells him that he has so come to Christ—that he does so trust in Christ—lay hold as it were upon Christ as the only possibility of forgiveness, then he draws the inference that therefore he is forgiven. God will not tell him personally that he is forgiven—will not produce upon him a supernatural impression that he is forgiven. He gives him a general assurance—sets before him, and before all men, the general conditions of forgiveness. It is for him to determine whether he has complied with these conditions, and to conclude that, having done this, God has forgiven him, as He promised to do. And as soon as he believes this,

all the joy that he wished to feel naturally springs up in his heart. His feeling is produced by his faith, not his faith by his feeling. This is the only scriptural ground upon which the assurance of personal forgiveness can rest—the consciousness that I have complied with the conditions upon which God promised forgiveness. The consciousness of a new heart—of the feelings and sympathies of a regenerate soul—the witness of the Spirit with my spirit that I am a child of God, comes afterwards, and is confirmatory evidence of our first faith in the declaration of Scripture about forgiveness.

Not less momentous is the question of the call to the ministry. It is very clear that a simple desire for the ministry, however pure and elevated that desire may be, is not a sufficient reason for entering upon it; there would be something very strange and unnatural in a young man of ordinary gifts, if, in the first fervour and gratitude of his spiritual life, he did not think of giving himself to the preaching of the gospel that has saved him, and anxiously and prayerfully ask whether such was God's will concerning him. It is not always easy to interpret indications of God's providence, and it is less easy to specify them; they are often impressions and feelings, rather than demonstrations, having a force with the subjects of them which can neither be explained nor justified to others. Perhaps all that can be said is, that a strong and intelligent personal desire must combine with manifest capabilities, the concurrence of those who are fitted to form a judgment, and with favouring circumstances. In meditating such a step, a man needs to cherish the most

prayerful and jealous solicitudes that he may not force Providence rather than follow it. And assuredly, if with a humble earnest spirit, a man prayerfully seek Divine direction in forming his judgment, and not merely Divine sanction of his judgment formed, the God of wisdom and of love will not permit him to err. If in godly sincerity a man prefer the prayer, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" he will not lack the answer, "It shall be shewn thee what thou shalt do." Different men will be guided to their conclusion in different ways; and according to their differences of character and circumstance, by different processes of thought and feeling. We may feel that the strong convictions of Mr Sherman rested upon a somewhat perilous basis, and yet who can doubt that God was leading His young servant by the right way to the office and the work which so greatly blessed the Church?

College Life.

"The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary; he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned."

"Give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. . . . . Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all."

"I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem."

"It may be said," concerning the apostle Paul's retirement into Arabia. "that with such convictions recently worked in his mind, he would yearn for solitude; that a time of austere meditation before the beginning of a great work is in conformity with the economy of God; that we find it quite natural, if Paul followed the example of the Great Lawgiver and the Great Prophet, and of one greater than Moses and Elijah, who, after His baptism, and before His ministry, 'returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.'"—*Conybeare and Howson's Life and Epistles of St Paul*, vol. i., p. 106.

CHAPTER I.

THE College at Cheshunt, at which Mr Sherman received his education for the ministry, and of which for many years of his life, and until his death, he was honorary secretary, occupies a peculiar position amongst the colleges of Nonconformists. It was founded by the noble and saintly Countess of Huntingdon, who, notwithstanding some anomalies of position in the Church of Christ, some defects of temper, and some exercises of arbitrary authority over ministers and churches,—more easily accounted for than justified,—must ever be regarded as one of the most remarkable and influential of the promoters of the evangelical revival of the last century.

Converted through the means of her sister, Lady Margaret Hastings, who herself had been converted through the preaching of the early Methodists, she sent a message to the Wesleys avowing her great change, and identifying herself with their religious movements. Her husband, the Earl of Huntingdon, an excellent and pious man, was concerned at this, and recommended her to converse with Dr Benson, Bishop of Gloucester, his former tutor. The Bishop cautioned her against "Evangelical Methodism;" but the Countess pressed him so hard with the Articles and Homilies

of his own Church, that at length he got angry, and abruptly left her, expressing his regret that he had ever laid hands upon George Whitefield, to whom he attributed this change. "My Lord," she replied, "mark my words, when you come upon your dying bed, that will be one of the few ordinations you will reflect upon with complacency." The prediction was singularly verified, for when near his death the Bishop sent ten guineas to Whitefield, as an expression of his great veneration for his character and work, with a request to be remembered by him in his prayers. With characteristic lack of spiritual discernment, Southey attributes the religious enthusiasm of the Countess "to a decided insanity in her family," and speaks of the fruitless attempt of the Bishop to bring her to "a saner sense of devotion;" but with the lack of something more than spiritual discernment, he omits to mention the Bishop's dying message to Whitefield.*

The social position of Lady Huntingdon, as a member of the higher ranks of the aristocracy; her great personal abilities, her simple and childlike consecration of herself to Christ, and her self-sacrifice of everything for Christ's sake, entitle her to be regarded as the peer of even Whitefield or Wesley; and, as, in her peculiar way doing as much as they for the spread of evangelical doctrine, and the quickening of spiritual life; pre-eminently might they have described her as one of "the holy women who laboured with them in the gospel." Her energy and zeal were such as to raise her habitual life to the level of other men's special impulses. Nothing in the history of the Christian Church has been more deplorable than the condition of the English Church

* Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 231.

in the early part of the eighteenth century. Puritanism was little more than a memory. Modern Evangelism was not yet born. Unspiritualness had generated scepticism, and the lack of faith had extinguished life. The philosophy of the age was represented by Bolingbroke, and its theology by Atterbury. The godlessness of the Restoration had been succeeded by the infidelity of the first two Georges. The revel had ended, and a cold cynical bitterness had followed it, which found its fitting expression, first in the motley of Hudibras, then in the scepticism of Bolingbroke. "It is come," says Bishop Butler,* "I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And, accordingly, they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment." The system of patronage in the Established Church had been perverted to the vilest uses, political and otherwise. The religious life of the community had almost died out. In thousands of parishes the clergy were not even converted. The idea that they should be so was ridiculed. Even Bishops could be found to caution peeresses against Evangelism.

"The hungry sheep look'd up, and were not fed."

From this state of things the spiritual quickening under Whitefield and Wesley, and their coadjutors, was a natural and merciful reaction.

No one acquainted with her history can doubt that, although she exercised so much despotic power, the principles

* Preface to "The Analogy."

and motives of Lady Huntingdon were of the purest and most exalted character. She seems to have been utterly free from ecclesiastical ambition; least of all did she aspire to be the head of a religious party. Touched by deep spiritual sympathies, and fired by noble spiritual impulses, she adopted any means that presented themselves whereby the people might have the gospel of Christ preached to them; no matter where it might be, or who it was that preached, she was contented, so long as she could get people together to hear the gospel, and any qualified man to preach it. Even as compared with her ministerial coadjutors, she seems to have been singularly free from conventional restraints—far more in sympathy with the wayside or theatre preaching of our own day, than with the ecclesiastical ritualism of hers.

Not only did she open her own drawing-room for preaching, but she hired rooms and barns and theatres wherever she could. Her two principal chapels in London, Spafields and Sion Chapel, had both been theatres. The same yearning spiritual desire led her to hire or build chapels, and to purchase "next presentations." If she could get clergymen to preach in them, well and good; if not, she would employ her gardener to preach; anything rather than no preaching at all: —a course which all must approve who do not magnify church-systems above men's souls, and who would not have condemned Christ and His apostles.

To the last, Lady Huntingdon was conscientiously attached to the Established Church—she was a Dissenter only by compulsion. And only when the clergy of the Establishment failed her, did she look elsewhere for preachers to supply her pulpits.

In fairness, therefore, she must be fully acquitted of all conscious ecclesiastical ambition: her purposes and aims were unselfish and noble; she sought merely "if by any means she might save some." Her arbitrariness was but a form of her energy—the uncalculating intensity of her zeal. Practically, no doubt, she did, in her latter days, become "a little Pope," and exercised over her chapels and ministers a despotic authority, unseemly even for an apostle, but most unseemly in a woman. That she exercised this despotism for good, and from the purest motives, is no vindication of it; this was "a happy accident,"—it might have been otherwise. But it was clearly accidental, partly the result of a naturally imperious will, and partly the necessity of circumstances.

Her chapels multiplied in her hands, as by appeals to her friends, the consecration of her income, and even the sale of her jewels,* she succeeded in purchasing them.

"When I gave myself to the Lord," she said, "I likewise devoted to Him all my fortune, with this reserve, that I would take, with a sparing hand, what might be necessary for my food and raiment, and for the support of my children, should they live to be reduced." Her whole income, during the greater part of her life, was only

* The following is a list of the jewels sold, from a memorandum made by one of her friends:—

Two 15 ⋈ drops,	£400 0 0
Twenty-eight, 13 ⋈ 2,	90 0 0
Thirty-seven pearls, at £4, 15s. each,	175 15 0
Seed pearls,	10 0 0
Gold box,	23 0 0
	£698 15 0

£1200 per annum. Her chapels became property, needing legal security and constant management; their pulpits needed supplying with ministers; and the thought does not seem to have occurred to her, that a more seemly ecclesiastical management might have been devised than her own autocracy. Conscious of the holy integrity of her motives, and of the lofty unselfishness of her aims, she naturally felt that in her own hands they were more secure for their evangelic purposes than in any other.

To Lady Huntingdon belongs the credit of having first established lay-preaching in connexion with the Methodist movement. The first sermon, or religious address of this order was by a Mr Brown, who got so excited while listening to one of Whitefield's sermons in Islington churchyard, that in spite of Charles Wesley, who endeavoured to make him desist, he got up and addressed the people; but the first regular lay-preacher was a Mr Maxwell, whom Lady Huntingdon had often heard pray at Fetter Lane Chapel, and whom she at length urged to expound the Scriptures; which he did with so much unction and success, that at her ladyship's earnest request, he began to preach. When John Wesley heard of this, he was so scandalised that he came in hot haste to London to put a stop to it. His mother, a wise and pious woman, at that time residing at the Foundry, had heard Maxwell preach; and on ascertaining the object of her son's hasty and angry visit, she said, "John, you know what my sentiments have been; you cannot suspect me readily of favouring anything of the kind; but take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the

fruits of his preaching, and hear him yourself." John heard Maxwell preach, and at once withdrew his opposition. "It is," said he, "the Lord; let him do what seemeth to him good." He soon discovered that it was impossible to prevent his followers from preaching, and with characteristic sagacity, he resolved to lead and direct the stream that he could not stem.

After Maxwell had preached for a few years, he was ordained by the Bishop of Derry, then residing in Bath, and a frequent hearer of Whitefield, Romaine, and Fletcher, at Lady Huntingdon's Chapel. "Sir," said he, referring to Whitefield, "I ordain you to assist that good man, that he may not work himself to death." A few years afterwards, Maxwell withdrew from Wesley's society, taking with him six hundred members; after which, for some years, he was the useful minister of a very large chapel in Princes Street, Moorfields.

One of Lord Huntingdon's servants at Donnington Park, named David Taylor, a man of considerable ability and of some education, had been converted by the preaching of the Methodists. He was sent forth by the Countess into the surrounding villages and hamlets, and preached with so much success, that at length she formally employed him as an itinerant preacher through the midland counties, he continuing to reside beneath her roof at Donnington. He was joined by a Mr Deacon, one of his converts, who also itinerated under the patronage and direction of the Countess. And this was the beginning of itinerant preaching.

CHAPTER II.

LADY HUNTINGDON'S first efforts for the promotion of colleges for training young men for the ministry were made in connexion with the Presbyterian College in New Jersey, about which she had heard from Whitefield, and which, in connexion with some Dissenting ministers in London, she very actively supported. She was on terms of great intimacy with Dr Doddridge, and at his solicitation, gave her hearty support and liberal contributions towards a scheme for the establishment of an academy in London, for the education of young men for the ministry amongst Dissenters—several of their large congregations being at that time (1753) without pastors, and the departure from the orthodox faith of many of their ministers having awakened her evangelical solicitude. "Lady Huntingdon's generosity," said the Rev. John Barker in acknowledging her donation, "is noble and catholic." She also supplied funds to enable Dr Doddridge to add two tutors and six pupils to his academy at Northampton, where more than one student for the Dissenting ministry was educated at her sole expense.

The success of Whitefield in his drawing-room preachings; the expulsion of Mr Romaine from St George's, Hanover Square; and the growing opposition in the Church of England to evangelical preaching, gave additional impetus to Lady Huntingdon's determination to buy or build chapels, not only in London, but all over the kingdom. For a supply of ministers for these chapels, she, at first, almost exclusively depended upon evangelical clergymen; and Whitefield, Top-

lady, Romaine, Fletcher of Madely, Haweis, Venn, Berridge, and a great many others, whose names are less prominently written upon the history of the evangelical revival of the last century, were her regular supplies. Her success in these experiments only increased her zeal; and her chapels so multiplied that she could no longer depend upon a source of ministerial supply so limited and precarious as the occasional absence from their parishes of devout clergymen. Moreover, the growing magnitude of this movement began to excite opposition, on the ground of its irregular character and possible tendencies. This gave rise, about the year 1767, to the idea of a collegiate institution for the education of pious young men for the ministry; and, after much correspondence with Mr Fletcher, Mr Whitefield, Mr Wesley, and others, in which she solicitously sought such direction or sanction as the Word of God might afford, she determined to establish such an institution at Trevecca, in the parish of Talgarth, Brecknockshire, South Wales, which, with Whitefield and other evangelical preachers, she had been in the habit of visiting for evangelistic purposes. Her college, therefore, was the natural complement of her chapels, and the result of the necessity of supplying them with ministers. Trevecca House, an ancient structure, part of an old castle, supposed to have been erected in the time of Henry II., and bearing date over the entrance 1176, was secured, and on the 24th of August 1768 it was opened by a dedicatory sermon, preached by Whitefield, from Exod. xx. 24. The college was dedicated to religious and literary instruction, and the chapel to the preaching of the everlasting gospel. The students admitted were such only as gave indications of

being truly converted to God, and proposed to dedicate themselves to God's service. They were to remain in the college three years, receive their education and support gratis, with a suit of clothes once a-year.

The plan and constitution of her college were prepared by Fletcher, Romaine, Wesley, Venn, and others. Mr Fletcher was invited to become its first tutor and president; and induced by its two fundamental principles, that piety should be an indispensable qualification for admission in a student, and that when their education was finished the students should be at liberty to exercise their ministry wherever Providence should open a door, he, without fee or reward, consented to take such superintendence of it as occasional residence and constant counsel might enable, and especially to give advice concerning the appointment of trustees and the admission of students. The first student was a member of Mr Fletcher's own congregation at Madely, and the first-fruit of his ministry there. He was a young collier, named James Glazebrook, who afterwards became an able and useful clergyman.

With Mr Fletcher was associated the Rev. Joseph Easterbrook, afterwards vicar of the parish of Temple, in the city of Bristol. Mr Easterbrook, the first head-master, was succeeded, on Mr Wesley's recommendation, by the Rev. Joseph Benson, one of the brightest ornaments of early Methodism; and the college, being provided with able and devout tutors, soon began to fill with students. Lady Huntingdon commonly resided at the college-house; and the influence of her fervent and maternal piety upon the students was very remarkable; while that of Mr Fletcher was apostolic, and,

like Elijah in the schools of the prophets, he was revered, almost adored by all. The seraphic piety of that saintly man seems to have wrought most powerfully upon all who came near him.

"The reader will pardon me," says Mr Benson, "if he thinks I exceed. My heart kindles while I write. Here it was that I saw, shall I say an angel in human flesh? I should not far exceed the truth if I said so; but here I saw a descendant of fallen Adam so fully raised above the ruins of the fall, that though by the body he was tied down to earth, yet was his whole conversation in heaven—yet was his life from day to day hid with Christ in God. Prayer, praise, love, and zeal, all ardent, elevated above what one would think attainable in this state of frailty, were the elements in which he continually lived. And as to others, his one employment was to call, entreat, and urge the students to ascend with him to the glorious Source of being and blessedness."

The biographer of the Countess of Huntingdon adds:—"Mr Fletcher had leisure, comparatively, for nothing else. Languages, art, sciences, grammar, rhetoric, logic, even divinity itself, as it is called, were all laid aside when he appeared in the schoolroom among the students. His full heart would not suffer him to be silent. He *must* speak; and they were readier to hearken to this servant and minister of Jesus Christ, than to attend to Sallust, Virgil, Cicero, or any Latin or Greek historian, poet, or philosopher they had been engaged in reading. And they seldom hearkened long before they were all in tears, and every heart caught fire from the flame that burned in his soul. These seasons

generally terminated in this—being convinced that to be filled with the Holy Ghost was a better qualification for the ministry of the gospel than any classical learning, (although that, too, is useful in its place:) after speaking for a while in the schoolroom he used frequently to say, 'As many of you as are athirst for this fulness of the Spirit follow me into my room.' On this many of them have instantly followed him, and there continued for two or three hours wrestling, like Jacob, for the blessing, praying one after another till they could bear to kneel no longer. This was not done once or twice, but many times."

"And I have sometimes seen him," again says Mr Benson, "on these occasions, once in particular, so filled with the love of God, that he could contain no more, but cried out, 'O my God! withhold Thy hand or the vessel will burst!' But he afterwards told me he was afraid he had grieved the Spirit of God, and that he ought rather to have prayed that the Lord would enlarge the vessel, or have suffered it to break, that the soul might have had no further bar or interruption to the enjoyment of the Supreme Good."*

The influence of such a man upon the youthful minds and hearts of the students may well be imagined. His spiritual life was an intense and pervading fervour, fusing and subduing all things. "The zeal of the Lord consumed him." His judgment might not always be wise; but such enthusiastic inspiration of fervent spiritual life and purpose was an infinitely higher qualification for the ministry—an infinitely higher wisdom even—than any mere teachings could have been. The intuitions of a fervent love are a surer guide

* Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon, vol. ii., p. 103.

in all things, especially in spiritual things, than the reasonings of a clear understanding. "God," says Pascal, "has designed that divine truths should pass from the heart into the head, and not from the head into the heart; and so, as it is necessary to know human things in order to love them, it is necessary to love divine things in order to know them." And in saying this, the great thinker only paraphrases the words of the divine Master, "If any man will do his will, he shall know the doctrine whether it be of God." Only "the pure in heart shall *see* God." He who would "declare the Father" must "dwell in His bosom."

Mr Benson had been only nine months at Trevecca, when a controversy arose concerning the minutes of Mr Wesley's Conference of 1770, involving some of the doctrinal questions between Arminianism and Calvinism—a controversy which was the curse of the evangelistic movement, and the cause of half its troubles; and this was one of its most disastrous and disgraceful episodes. Mr Benson, espousing the side of Arminianism and Wesley, was dismissed by Lady Huntingdon from the college.

At the same time, and for the same cause, Mr Fletcher also resigned his connexion with the college; and from this time Mr Wesley was excluded from the pulpits of the Countess's chapels.

After the establishment of the college at Trevecca, Lady Huntingdon made it her chief residence. Her very soul seemed bound up in the interests of the students, and in their efficiency in doing the work of God. "You know," she says, writing to one of them, "I am only the Lord's poor servant for you all. To have you not only to walk in

the truth, but to become eminent servants of that dear Lamb of God—that is my only portion and joy." She took the general management of the college into her own hands, and made it the centre of most extensive home-missionary operations; directing the preaching of the students, and appointing them to chapels, either as occasional supplies, or, as permanent ministers, sending them even to Ireland and North America. "I have never," she says, "sent a student forth to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ without special prayer and supplication to God, the Judge of all, and sovereign Head of His Church, that He would be graciously pleased to bless the feeble instruments, and enable them to deliver, with fidelity and zeal, His proclamation of mercy to the guilty and rebellious children of men—to enrich their understandings—to cultivate their talents—to endue them with hearts of deeper sensibility for the ignorance and misery of their fellow-men—and to crown their labours with a harvest of immortal souls, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb."

Sometimes, her commands were imperative and arbitrary enough; and it would require great grace, and great faith in the singleness of her aim and the purity of her motives, to bear with them. Here are two examples from her letter-book:—

"TO MR BRYSON, STUDENT AT READING, BERKS.

"COLLEGE, *Aug.* 23, 1782.

"I was quite surprised at your supposition that I could approve a conduct that had such invariable marks of injustice and unfaithfulness, as appears by your proposal; or, indeed, not finding abhorrence to those proposals, that must make you, in the eyes of all honest men, as so unworthy of

a servant of God in or under any profession. It was your own act to request my receiving you, and giving such assistance to deliver you from an agreement the laws of the land secured you by. Shall these be more honoured than the conscience towards God and His services, because of certain punishment annexed to them? What an abomination in the idea only, to an upright mind! What a use of liberty to be able the better to act like a heathen, and that to those who only have, or do mean, the most disinterested kindness to you! Indeed, the unfeelingness of your letter made me ready to weep for you. However, till your time is out, you must expect the directions due from me for your engagements, as an honest man made with me; and this, whatever disrespect you shew me by such a proposal and disregard to all God's servants, you by your own choice (and only that) stand connected with. My directions are sent to Johnson, to go to London from Lynn, and to give you the meeting there; to go through the west of England, and so into Cornwall; and Shuter the student to take your place at Reading, and you to take his horse for the purpose of this general and universal excursion of preaching the gospel in the west; and in case you observe my directions, and mean to act consistent with your own character, I will write to Mr Wills, who I would have exactly examine what you want, in order you may be supplied with all necessaries and money for you; and to Johnson also for your careful expenses severally. Should no attention be paid to these orders, I must hope on no occasion you will ever further trouble me, or insult one who has been so faithful a friend to you.

"S. HUNTINGDON."

"TO MR LLOYD, STUDENT IN CORNWALL.

"The style, spirit, and unhappy temper of your letter shocked me extremely. You have my directions to set out for college, where clothes and whatever you can want is ready for you. You do not suppose it needful for you, for a journey, to ride in this weather, that your new clothes should be provided for that purpose. If the people will not bear your expenses to college, I have wrote to Mr Painter to let you have money at the usual allowance of one guinea for every hundred miles. Should your sentiments, which you hint at as being those of the Baptists, and as lately adopted, be as I suppose, you must mean to leave the Connexion, and perhaps you have chose thus to leave it by that most unhappy spirit each line of your letter abounds with. You must know your own resolutions best, and you know well, none are received, or allowed to continue, when these principles are known. The just right you and all have to think and well understand for themselves, must cause these varieties in judgment; and as I would not condemn any for their principles, so the same liberty we do expect; and while wishing well to all, preserving union and peace must be our point, and as the apostolic maxim must be ours, 'Mark those that cause divisions among you, and avoid them,' thus party rage, abuse, personal offence to any, loses all pretensions to the Christian profession; speaking the truth in love is the only wise and fit condemnation that should arise from followers of so glorious a Master. These limits cannot hurt you, and you have my free pardon for all those insults and abuses you have taken such profuse liberty in using. You see my direction to you in common with

all others, and my intentions to fulfil my engagements with you and them, or to part in peace when they choose to act inconsistent with their characters in that situation first chose by themselves, and so afflictive to me, while meaning to shew every kindness in my power to all sent. This I should suppose must contain all things you can want for your information, and as due from your ever intended friend,

"S. HUNTINGDON."

CHAPTER III.

THE anniversaries of the college were always great occasions. The earlier anniversaries were the scenes of some of Whitefield and Wesley's most exciting and successful labours. Mr Toplady thus describes the anniversary of 1776:—*

"On the anniversary day in Wales, the congregation was so large that the chapel would not have contained a fourth part of the people, who were supposed to amount to three thousand. No fewer than one thousand three hundred horses were turned into a large field adjoining the college, besides what were stationed in the neighbouring villages; the carriages also were unusually numerous. A scaffold was erected at one end of the college court, on which a bookstand was placed, by way of pulpit, and thence six or seven of us preached successively, to one of the most attentive and most lively congregations I ever beheld."

And he adds, "I had the happiness to see dear Lady Hunt-

* Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon, vol. ii., p. 122.

ingdon (who is the most precious saint of God I ever knew) well, both in body and soul."

The labours of the student soon became an important part of the agency by which the evangelical movements of the day were conducted.

Amongst the students educated at Trevecca were—the Rev. John Clayton, sen., minister of the Weigh-house Chapel; the Rev. John Eyre, M.A., of Homerton; the Rev. Robert M'All of London; the Rev. Edward Parsons of Leeds; the Rev. Samuel Pearce of Truro; the Rev. William Roby of Manchester; the Rev. George Townsend of Ramsgate; the Rev. Matthew Wilks of London, and his brother, the Rev. Mark Wilks, and others, notable men in their generation, and leaders in its evangelical movements.

As episcopal ordination could not be obtained for the students, Lady Huntingdon was compelled to make the college a Dissenting college. The first Nonconforming ordination, however, did not take place until 1783, when six of the Trevecca students were ordained by the laying on of hands in Spafields Chapel by two clergymen, the Revs. Thomas Wills and —— Taylor, on which occasion they formally avowed themselves Dissenters, and placed themselves under the protection of the Toleration Act. On the death of Lady Huntingdon in 1791, she bequeathed her chapels to four of her friends, in order to avoid the law of mortmain, trusting to their religious honour and zeal for a faithful appropriation of them. One of these was Lady Anne Erskine, a daughter of the Earl of Buchan, a devoted friend of the Countess, with whom she had lived several years. To her, her co-trustees seem to have left the entire

management of the chapels. She was a woman of great ability, and of devoted piety. She continued to reside in Spafields House, and to administer the affairs of the college and chapels as the Countess had done; and for twelve years she performed these arduous functions to the satisfaction of her co-trustees, and of every one else. She died in 1804. On her death, she was succeeded in the administration of affairs by Dr Ford, the Rev. Dr Haweis, and Mr Oldham, her co-trustees.

Lady Huntingdon had supported the college at Trevecca at her sole personal expense; but her advanced age suggested the desirableness of providing some means for perpetuating it when she should be removed. About four years before her death, therefore, a few of her friends associated themselves together under the name of "The Apostolic Society," and collected funds for the purpose. Rules and regulations for its management were drawn up, and signed by her Ladyship. Seven trustees were chosen, upon whom, after her decease, the care of the college was to devolve, with power to appoint successors. The provisions of this trust-deed, prepared in pursuance of these resolutions and executed after her death, were singularly catholic, and in perfect harmony with the simple evangelic aims of her entire life. It provides that the students shall be "pious young men, whom the Lord shall please to call, and who may be desirous of devoting themselves to the work of the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ, at home or abroad . . . . . godly young men who give some evident reason to believe that they have experienced a saving work of grace upon their hearts, and are made willing to give up themselves

to the Lord Jesus Christ, to serve in the ministry of the gospel either at home or abroad, and either in the late Countess's Connexion, or otherwise, as they shall afterwards think proper;"—the only additional conditions required of either tutors or students being their assent to fifteen doctrinal articles of the Established Church. The students, therefore, were left at perfect liberty when their collegiate course was ended to exercise their ministry in connexion either with the Established Church, with the Countess's own chapels, or with any other body of Nonconformists. No obligations or restrictions in this matter, either direct or indirect, were imposed upon them. "But if," said the great-hearted woman, in the deed of the college, after speaking of the conditions of their ordination as ministers of her Connexion,—"But if such student or students shall rather choose or prefer to be ordained and serve in the Established Church, or other Churches of Christ, it shall and may be lawful for him or them, and he or they shall be at full and free liberty to do so, in case there shall be an opening or openings in Providence for his or their admission therein." *

Many of the early students, therefore, received episcopal ordination with the perfect approbation and assistance of the Countess. Some few became pastors of Congregational churches. Chiefly, however, and as a matter of course, the Countess's own chapels were supplied from her college. This was one of the purposes for which she established it; but with great generosity she forbore to stipulate it, preferring to leave the matter to the preferences of the students —the moral influences of her own noble character and

* Trust-Deed of Cheshunt College, 1793.

deeds—and to such providential changes as time might produce. The cause of Christ was much dearer to her than any particular church—even than her own chapels; and she was always prepared to do whatever might best promote that. While the Countess lived, and so long afterwards as the Connexion retained its vitality, its chapels required and secured the great majority of the students. Unhappily, through the growth of a litigious spirit, and from various other causes, the vital strength of the Connexion decayed; its chapels have dwindled both in numbers and in importance, until now they are very few and uninfluential. The natural effect upon the college has been, that they have failed to attract its students; and consequently, the latter, in the exercise of the liberty which the catholic-hearted Countess secured to them, have generally sought to exercise their ministry elsewhere,—chiefly in Congregational churches. No doubt, the Countess would greatly have deplored the decay of the chapels which she originated and sustained. So long as her personal piety could influence them, it sufficed to maintain them in vigour; but she would have been the first to denounce the unhappy causes of this decay, and the last to sacrifice power and usefulness to any denominational name whatever, even her own. The students of the college would have had her most hearty sanction in exercising their ministry wherever they could best serve Christ and save men's souls.

Since the decay of the Connexion, the college has been supported mainly by Congregational churches, and its students have chiefly become Congregational pastors—the total contributions to it from the chapels of the Connexion for the last ten years having averaged only £20 or £30.

Mr Sherman, however, recognised this change with the reluctance of early association; and on the last two occasions, when the presidency of the college was vacant, he, as the secretary of the college, was earnestly solicitous to find some minister of the Connexion who might be suitable for the position, or failing this, even some evangelical and liberal clergyman of the Established Church. And in this, he had the sympathy of the committee; but such could not be found.

The present support of the college, therefore, by Congregational churches, and the supply of Congregational pastors from it, have been the result of no sectarian feeling, but of the inevitable course of ecclesiastical affairs. These things have followed, on the one hand, from the decay of the Connexion, and from the cessation of the peculiar necessities that made Lady Huntingdon what she was—a member of the Church of England, and yet a builder of Nonconforming chapels; and, on the other, from the rapid growth and influence of the Congregational body—the section of the Nonconforming churches of England the nearest allied to the Connexion of the Countess, and which alone could have entered into her labours. The only influences that have wrought this change have been moral and social—the constitution and administration of the college are as catholic as its noble foundress intended them to be; and her admirable wisdom is shewn in nothing more than in this, that she did not enchain her institutions to any one body of Christians—not even to her own—so as to incur the risk of their being chained to a body of death.

Twelve months after the death of the Countess, convenient

premises, admirably situated at Cheshunt, having been purchased on very advantageous terms, the college was removed from Trevecca to Cheshunt; the dedicatory services being held on the 24th of August 1792, the anniversary of the opening of Trevecca College, and also Lady Huntingdon's birthday.

A chapel was subsequently erected upon the premises, and part of the college was rebuilt, providing additional accommodation for the students.

CHAPTER IV.

THE college at Cheshunt is situated in the midst of very beautiful natural scenery, and is surrounded by very interesting historical associations. The village stands on the southern border of the picturesque county of Hertford, and on the great northern road, about sixteen miles from London, and two from Waltham Cross,—the most beautiful of the monuments erected by Edward I. at the places where, on its way from Lincolnshire to London, the corpse of his beloved Queen Eleanor rested,—and not far from the ancient Abbey of Waltham, renowned for its Holy Cross, founded by Edward the Confessor, and in which the body of Harold was buried.

Across the churchyard, and within five minutes' walk of the college, stands, in Goff's Lane, the remains of "Cheshunt Great House," part of a large mansion said to have been the residence of Cardinal Wolsey, where he was often visited by his imperious sovereign. The spacious and lofty hall remains

entire; and for several years the anniversary meetings of the college were held in it, with the kind permission of the proprietor, Herbert Mayo, Esq.—the ghost of the magnificent Cardinal apparently suffering no disquiet from the intrusion of Nonconformists into his ancient abode. Perhaps the presence of the Rev. C. E. Mayo, M.A., an amiable and excellent clergyman, whose interest in the college never fails, did somewhat to conciliate it. The hall is hung with portraits of the Mayo family, and with specimens of ancient armour and other relics, including a chair, table, and bed-furniture belonging to Wolsey himself. Underneath it are a curious crypt and chapel, with a tesselated pavement, and provision for the celebration of midnight mass. The "blood-stained room" was pulled down a few years ago, and the instruments of torture which it contained were removed elsewhere. It is said that two or three waggon-loads of human bones were then discovered. The writer, when at the college, often heard the tradition, that from the top of Cheshunt House, Henry VIII. listened for the booming of the cannon that announced the death of one of his unhappy wives. About half-a-mile on the other side the college, stood Theobalds, the favourite residence of Lord Burleigh, where "Great Eliza," Henry's royal daughter, often conferred with her wise and trusty counsellor.

The palace was a favourite residence of James I., who delighted to hunt in its noble park,—which was ten miles in circumference, and enclosed by a wall. In this park the royal pedant was once nearly drowned; for on one occasion,—perhaps while revolving his erudite part at the Savoy Conference,—he fell into the New River, which ran through it, and

which he had just assisted Sir Hugh Myddleton to complete. It happened thus. Riding out one winter's day with his son, Prince Charles, he was thrown over the head of his horse into the river, which was slightly frozen over. He went head-foremost to the bottom, all of Majesty that remained visible being his boots. Sir Richard Young rapidly dragged him out, when "there came much water out of his mouth and body." In the same palace, four years afterwards, he died, and Charles I. reigned in his stead; who also took up his abode at Theobalds; where, in 1642, a short time before he placed himself at the head of the Cavaliers, he received the petition of Parliament.

In 1650, the palace was demolished by order of the Long Parliament, although the commissioners for selling the Crown lands had reported that "it was an excellent building, and in very good repair." The materials, sold to the highest bidder, realised £8275, 11s., and the proceeds were divided amongst the soldiers of Cromwell and Fairfax.

Immediately opposite the college, and divided from it by the road, stands an interesting old red-brick mansion, now inhabited by Alexander Morrison, Esq., a member of the college commitee, in which, after resigning the Protectorate, and returning from the Continent, Richard Cromwell lived for thirty-two years, under the name of Clarke, and where, in 1712, he died. In the churchyard, from which the mansion is separated only by the vicarage-house, repose the last descendants of the great Protector,—the last Oliver Cromwell being interred there in 1821, and the last female descendant in 1849. With the occupants of the vicarage, the tutors and students of the college have ever been on terms of the most amicable intercourse. The late estimable vicar, the Rev.

Matthew Morris Preston, an accomplished scholar, and a devout and devoted man, the friend of Charles Simeon, and the tutor of Lord Macaulay at Cambridge, took a great interest in the students: he enriched the library with many volumes, and often proffered the hospitality of the vicarage to missionary deputations, and other visitors to the college. His no less excellent successor, the Rev. J. G. Faithfull, M.A., is a man of the same catholic spirit; and in 1859, at the commencement of the college session, delivered the annual address to the students, which, at the request of the college committee, was afterwards published.

The college-buildings stand near Churchgate, about three quarters of a mile from the main London road, and on the rising ground formed by the west side of the valley of the Lea. They make no pretensions to architectural beauty, or to cloistered antiquity. Like everything that Lady Huntingdon did, they are simply utilitarian. Their nucleus is an old family mansion, to which, at different times, additions have been made, first for the convenience of some enlarging family, and then by buildings for college purposes. They form three sides of an irregular quadrangle, entered from the road on the west side by a gateway, having on the right the little chapel, with its amusing spire, erected in 1805, and on the left the college library: the northern end of the quadrangle is formed by the original old mansion, of antediluvian antiquity, which comprises the apartments of the housekeeper, the domestic offices, and six or seven rooms of the students. In the grounds at the southern end of the quadrangle is a new house just erected for the president. The eastern side consists of a large, plain brick building,

erected in 1821, for the accommodation of twenty students, with lecture-room, college dining-room, &c.

The college grounds, consisting now of about eleven acres, lie on the south side of the quadrangle, stretching considerably to the east. They are included in the angle of the road, and have recently been completed by the purchase of a house and a garden of three acres, forming the corner of the angle. The New River runs through the midst of the grounds, and makes them very picturesque. A broad grassy walk, shaded by overhanging trees, lies along the bank of the river, at the one end of which is a castellated summer-house, overgrown with ivy, and at the other a huge globular clump of privet, hollowed out to form an arbour, which has obtained the sobriquet of "Dr Watts' wig," from a tradition that the doctor used there to meditate.

From the upper windows of the college the eastern and southern views are very beautiful. Two or three miles away, on the opposite side of the valley of the Lea, lies the low range of the Essex hills. The deep foliage of some fine old trees constitutes the foreground to the right, and forms a rich sylvan scene of almost perfect beauty and repose—of its kind hardly to be surpassed. Many a dreamy hour has the writer gazed upon it from the windows of his study, or from the parapet of the college, and watched the simmering beauty of the afternoon sunlight, and the exquisite undulation of ever-changeful light and shade.

The neighbourhood of the college is picturesque, and abounds in pleasant walks—"constitutionals" of various lengths and degrees, affording plenty of tempting exercise to men just let loose from "roots" and "crude forms."

About a dozen village stations, at distances of from two to ten miles, are every Sunday supplied with preachers from the college, and in many ways furnish a most wholesome counteraction to the studies of the week. A walk of eighteen or twenty miles, and a couple of services, (the writer has walked twenty-two miles, and preached thrice,) afford a healthy exercise to the robuster men; while the practical demands which preaching makes upon the spiritual sympathies of the student are, both religiously and professionally, an inestimable benefit. The gospel is thus preached in places where a minister could not be supported, and great spiritual benefits are conferred. The frequent conversions, too, which are the result, keep up a constant appeal to the thankfulness and humility, as well as to the practical aims and earnestness of the students.

Mr Sherman always cherished a warm and practical affection for his *alma mater*. From the day that he left it, he was untiring in his devotedness to its interests. Unlike too many of the alumni of our colleges, whose regard for the place of their ministerial training selfishly ends with the benefits that they derive from it, and who neither visit nor support it, his donations to it were most liberal, and his personal services most untiring. For sixteen years he was its honorary secretary; and mainly to his zeal, and his importunity on its behalf, are owing the strength and public confidence which now place it amongst the very chief of our Nonconforming colleges.

When Mr Sherman entered the college, its president was the Rev. John James,—a most inefficient man in such a posi-

tion, and whose tenure of office, as appears from the minute-books, was marked by almost chronic dissatisfaction amongst both the students and the friends of the college.

Mr Sherman's first appearance before the trustees of the college is thus recorded in the minute-book, Nov. 2, 1815:—"James Sherman being called in, said he was born in Banner Street, St Luke's, 1796. Went three years to school to the Rev. Mr Fancourt. Was apprenticed to an ivory-turner, but from his health his indentures were given up. Is now an assistant in a school in St John's Square. Has had convictions from five years of age, but never savingly impressed until he heard the Rev. Mr King of Doncaster at the Tabernacle. Was then led to see the infinite evil of sin, and the total depravity of his heart; and was led to Jesus as a poor, lost sinner, enabled to cleave to Him by faith, and obtained comfort and peace to his mind from a hope of pardon. Enjoyed much from reading his Bible, and was brought to the liberty of the children of God. Has since heard the Rev. Messrs Wilkinson and Stodhart, and been much built up by their preaching. Has had a desire for the ministry a long time, but felt so much insufficiency that he was afraid it would never come to pass. Was encouraged, however, by many promises; and his desire for the ministry increasing, he now applied as a candidate for Cheshunt College. Read a letter from Mr White, St John's Square, being a testimonial of his character. The Rev. Mr Stodhart recommended him as possessing talents for the work. Being again called in, he answered the usual questions, and was admitted a probationer for three months."

And again, under date Feb. 1, 1816:—

"Read a letter from Mr James, as also one from Mr Macaulay, recommending Mr James Sherman, who now applied for full admission, as a young man of fervent piety, and possessing talents both for learning and preaching. Mr Sherman being present, was called in, and, after answering every question satisfactorily, was fully admitted on the foundation. Mr Hodson paid his coach-fare back to Cheshunt. He was desired to call upon Mr Hodson for an order for admittance, and to sign the agreement with the trustees relative to his stay at college until the period for his studies expire."

CHAPTER V.

It is a distinctive and indispensable thing, in all Nonconforming colleges, that candidates for admission be indubitably spiritual men. No gifts, however brilliant—no social influence, however great, is for a moment permitted to weigh against this essential pre-requisite. Only the Omniscient can read men's hearts, and college councils may be mistaken; but about this they scrupulously inquire. Nor would any Nonconforming college in the land admit a student who did not give what to the committee was satisfactory evidence of "repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." They rightly judge, that he who would teach men salvation must himself be a partaker of it—must "speak the things that he has seen, and heard, and tasted of the good word of God"—must not only "point to heaven, but lead

the way." Many a godly parent who has dedicated his son to the Lord, many an influential minister, many a wealthy layman,—a member, perhaps, of the college council, or a most liberal supporter of the college,—has been disappointed here; the promise of early piety has not been fulfilled; virtuous habit has not ripened into manifest spiritual life; and, while the humblest son of the church has been welcomed as a theological neophyte, its wealthiest and most influential son has sadly turned away his approaching foot,—none more decidedly approving than his disappointed friends.

Scholarship is not undervalued. Each student is incited to secure degrees in arts from the London University, with which all the colleges are affiliated. That which is impossible from the national universities is possible here; and with this scholastic superiority, that no degree is conferred but as the acknowledgment and signature of genuine scholarship, as indicated by separate and severe examinations. The pass degrees of the London University stand in advantageous comparison with those of any university in the United Kingdom. They are the certain marks of high attainments. The colleges refuse no man, however uneducated, whose piety and abilities give indication of ministerial usefulness. They seek for the raw material out of which efficient men are made. But no man is admitted to the ordinary curriculum until he can pass an examination in Virgil, and in the Greek of John's Gospel, in the elements of mathematics, and, of course, in English grammar, &c. If he have not this fitness when he appears before the college council, a provision is made for its attainment by preparatory classes, or by private tuition. In every case, this preliminary qualification is insisted upon;

but the after curriculum is regulated by the fitness and aims of the alumnus. Some men enter our colleges having already taken their university degree. In such cases, the classical and mathematical courses are either omitted or abridged; the student devotes himself chiefly to theology; and the ordinary college curriculum of six, five, or four years, is shortened to three, or two, as the case may be. In no college is it less than two. In Cheshunt, the ordinary curriculum is four years, independently of preparatory classes. Nor can any student have his name entered upon the college rolls whose residence has not exceeded two years.

Other men, again, having a manifest fitness for a certain kind of ministerial work, are as manifestly men upon whom the higher culture of the college would be wasted. Little more, therefore, than rudimental classical and mathematical exercises are attempted with them; their studies are chiefly theological; and after two or three years, according to the judgment of the tutors, they go forth as missionaries to some parts of the heathen field, as home missionaries, or as pastors of village churches.

In Nonconforming colleges, theological culture and ministerial efficiency are the chief objects of solicitude. The foundation of general classical study is assumed wherever this is possible, or laid as rapidly as may be where it needs to be laid; and the chief labour of college life is devoted to the edifice of theology to be erected on it. Of necessity it is so—they are not places of general, but of specific and professional education. It is felt to be the most disastrous of all anomalies that students for the ministry should be versed in everything but in theology—wise in everything but in

the duties of the ministerial office; it is felt that if anything must be neglected, it must not be the specific thing for which theological colleges are established. The law of our colleges, therefore, is, adequate theological instruction in every case, and as much instruction in other things as is compatible with that. In comparison with the clergy of the Establishment, Nonconforming ministers may have been inferior in scholarship;—it was hardly their fault, lying under the disabilities inflicted upon them; they have never ceased to regret it, and are now making vigorous and successful efforts to remedy it;—but they have been superior theologians; they have never been amenable to the reproach that they "knew less of the apostle Paul than they did of Epictetus."

Every candidate for admission to the college forwards, first, the recommendation of his minister, or of the church of which he is a member; then, written answers to questions relating to his spiritual life, his views of scriptural truth, his motives in seeking the ministry, and his ideas and purposes respecting its discharge. If these are satisfactory, he then appears before the examining committee, and is examined concerning his habits of spiritual life and usefulness, his reading, &c., in order that an impression of his general tone of character may be received. And then, after the preliminary examination that tests his fitness to join the classes, he enters the college, a probationer for three months; at the end of which, he again appears before the committee, a report concerning him is presented by the tutors, and, if satisfactory, he is admitted on the foundation, and receives counsel from some elder brother or father in the ministry, concerning the temper and aims of

a college course. Nonconforming ministers may fail in their ministry—fail in character or in aptitude—but all that human precaution can do to prevent such failure is done. In the fear of God, and with simple, earnest aims, the college council seeks to exclude from its curriculum every man whose piety or whose aptitude is doubtful.

"On Monday evening, Nov. 6, 1815, I started for Cheshunt College, by the stage-coach from the Flower-pot, Bishopsgate Street. It was a very comfortless afternoon, and my spirits were in sympathy with the weather. My dear mother and I had spent some time together with God, and were cheered at parting; but when I was fairly in the coach, the strong tide of feeling bore me away. I had many melancholy forebodings: 'You are now going to college, but with many fears that you have not suitable qualifications for the work for which you are seeking preparation. A college may refine, exalt, and teach you how to use talent, but it cannot give it. Will you, therefore, be anything better than a ministerial drone? Who will listen to your preaching? What good can you hope to accomplish? What souls will be converted to God by your ministry? You will be the laughingstock of the students, and after the probationary term is ended, will be sent back as unfit for the sacred office to which you aspire. Your father's judgment of you will prove correct. And you will find, whatever impression of a call from God you may have, that He never calls any one to an office for which he is not qualified. You had better return home than suffer such mortification and humiliation.'

"With these and other temptations of Satan harassing

me, I asked myself, 'Is it a dream? Was that application to my soul of Jeremiah's call, so relieving, so assuring, a delusion? Could delusion have sustained me under my father's opposition, my own despondency, and so many providential obstructions? Was my deliverance from my tyrannical master no proof of God's intentions concerning me? My judgment concluded that whatever happened, my course was clear, to go to college and risk the result.

"Arriving at the college, I shut myself in my room as soon as possible, and poured out all my trouble before the Lord, and besought Him to help His child, whom He had permitted to enter this hall of learning, that he might prepare for the work of the ministry. Peace was the result, for a few days; but anxiety of mind, and the exchange of habits of active life for those of study, soon reduced my strength. Boils, very large and painful, soon made their appearance; and, with enfeebled health, my distress of mind increased. It was then a rule of the college, happily dispensed with since, that a student entering the college should the following week preach before the professors and students. My congregation consisted of two professors and sixteen students, sitting in all manner of crooked positions in the library. My text was Ezek. xxix. 21, 'In that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them; and they shall know that I am the Lord.' It was so far verified that I did not halt or hesitate for about fifteen minutes; yet prudence would have selected a different text, as it wore the appearance of presumption, and led my audience to expect from me much more than they obtained. However,

the ice was broken; I had made my first attempt in preaching, and hoped that painstaking and prayer would help me in the future.

"On the following Sunday I preached in a farm-house at Brickendon, in Hertfordshire. I thought that I would try to extemporise from a sketch, but failed. For the students, I had carefully written the whole, and had committed the leading thoughts to memory, and therefore succeeded tolerably well; but this effort was attempting to fly before I was fledged, and it taught me that, if I depended upon God for a blessing, it must be after careful preparation. The president appointed me to preach the next Lord's-day in the college chapel. I regarded it as a terrible ordeal, and begged him to allow me a longer space before I attempted it. He was, however, inflexible, saying that it was better to make the attempt while the twig would bend, than, by a long abstinence, to grow stiff and formal. My text was Prov. xviii. 10, 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.' Oh, how my knees smote together as I ascended the pulpit stairs! My nerves seemed unstrung, and any attempt to preach physically impossible; but while they were singing the hymn, I became more composed. God favoured me with great enlargement in prayer, which I have since learned to regard as an almost sure omen of a happy sermon. My voice was tremulous when I began; but before the introduction of the discourse was finished, I felt as much confidence in preaching as if it had been my customary work. A singular unction accompanied the discourse. I saw both the professors much moved, and several of the congregation in tears. It was a

season of serious joy, when every power of body and soul seemed overflowing with love to the Crucified, as the strong refuge of condemned souls. When such is the case, preaching is pleasure—the noblest to be tasted on earth. When I descended the pulpit, both the professors met me and congratulated me, as also did many of the congregation."

The original MS. of this juvenile sermon lies before me, endorsed as preached in the college chapel, December 17, 1815; but it consists of only four not very closely-written pages, the reading of which would not occupy more than ten minutes. The preacher, therefore, must have depended very largely upon his powers of extemporaneous expression for filling in the outline, and for producing this great effect. The arrangement of the sermon is most simple, and its thought most commonplace.

After two or three remarks on the representation by metaphors of God's relations to us, the sermon is constructed thus:—

"I. What the Lord is to His people—'a strong tower.'

"1. A tower is a place of security;

"2. Of repose.

"3. The Lord Jesus is a merciful tower, well-stored with provision suitable to the needs of His people.

"II. Who are they that run into this tower—'the righteous.'

"1. Not those who are righteous in their own esteem.

"2. No man runs to a place of safety unless danger threatens—justice threatens the sinner.

"3. They are those who are pursued by spiritual enemies.

"4. They are those who are beaten off from all other refuges.

"5. They are those who are made to feel a hungering and a thirsting after righteousness.

"III. Their safety.

"1. They are safe from the justice of God.

"2. They are safe from the destructive power of Satan.

"3. They are safe by being delivered from the sting of death.

"4. They are safe from the torments of hell.

"Their privileges in this strong tower are also great:—

"1. They are mercifully favoured with the smile of the Beloved.

"2. They have the earnest of the better world.

"3. They are privileged in having the Lord for their keeper.

"Application—

"1. We are all poor sinners exposed to danger.

"2. Here is a merciful strong tower, provided for all who feel their need of it."

These are the bones as put down upon paper, and little more is put down besides these bones. We are left to imagine with what living flesh the youthful preacher clothed them to produce the effect which was produced; but so it was from the beginning of Mr Sherman's ministry to the end. He possessed very eminently what the fathers used to call "the gift of tears." There was "a tear even in the tone of

his voice." He put an intense emotion into even the most ordinary things; and words, which from most men's lips would have been cold and commonplace, were full of living and enkindling fire as they fell from his. The sermon is simple, practical, spiritual; having, however, the two great characteristics of all Mr Sherman's sermons; first, considerable breadth and symmetry of structure; and, secondly, an intense and practical and comprehensive evangelism. Whatever his sermons might be in other respects, they invariably went to the very heart and root of evangelical doctrine; and this was the fundamental condition of their power.

"One of the professors took me home with him to tea, and greatly encouraged me to persevere in efforts to preach, as they would give me confidence, and help me to form my style; besides, what I believe was my supreme desire—do good to souls. With varied success, as my time would allow from the ordinary studies of the college, I wrote and preached sermons, often returning much humbled—sometimes rejoicing. I cannot forget one occasion. The professor had appointed me to preach on the thanksgiving day, in January 1816, for the victories gained by England, and for the conclusion of the war. I pleaded my utter disqualification for such a service—my ignorance of any but the leading events of the war; and stated, that, with my present light, I should greatly prefer dealing with personal, rather than with national mercies. 'The very thing,' he replied; 'we are informed sufficiently on the subjects of war and victory: deal with souls and make them thankful, and you will achieve the design of the day. I shall appoint no

one else. I will preach in the morning—you must preach in the evening.' Seeing that there was no escape, I wrote a sermon on Ps. xxiii. 6, 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.' I was much with God for a special blessing. The college chapel was crowded, and I had some difficulty in getting to the pulpit. From the very commencement of the sermon, the dews of heaven fell so copiously that I was carried far beyond anything that I had ever experienced. The people caught the inspiration, and the place was alternately a Bochim and a Beulah. God was eminently amongst us. The power could not be mistaken; it was a sober, silent, grateful, mighty operation, that humbled as well as rejoiced every heart. The divinity professor told me afterwards how greatly he was overpowered, and asked to see the sermon. After reading it he remarked, 'It *was* the sermon, wanting two things—the inexpressible power that accompanied it, and some unwritten sentences which had been incorporated with it.' Oh, it is not the well-composed discourse that saves souls, and turns them to God—though every one ought to be such—but 'the hand of the Lord' with the preacher. Pray, all ministers of Christ, wrestle with heaven, for that! Pulpit-born thoughts are generally most impressive. Slavish reading is not preaching. Happy the man whose retentive memory, sanctified imagination, and ardent piety, enable him to deliver his Master's message without a manuscript!

"My college life, I suppose, was much like that of other students. For mathematics and logic I had no taste, and the little I knew of them was acquired with severe labour.

Languages were less difficult to me, but I was too much absorbed in preaching, and the studies which specially prepared for it, to acquire scholarship. I diligently attended the few lectures that were given, and tried to profit by them, but the exegesis of the New Testament was my delight. John Owen of Bath, my immediate senior; Thomas Stevenson of Gate Street Chapel, Lincoln's Inn Fields; and George Mottram of Oldham, were my 'chums.' Right good-hearted souls were they, all intent upon doing good to their fellowmen, and rejoiced at any time to meet together for prayer. They are all in heaven. Mottram died of consumption; Stevenson laboured for a few years faithfully in London, and was called to his rest; and Owen, after about thirty years' service for Christ, died in Bath in 1860. Only another student of my time, besides myself, is left; the eighteen others are no more. Oh, how much does it become me to remember God's sparing goodness, in permitting one who appeared weaker than they all, and amidst more abundant labours, to survive them!"

CHAPTER VI.

"THE villages around the college afforded scope and opportunity for pious efforts, and the exercise of the talents of the students; and very greatly were their labours appreciated. And they were a good school. If a man was in earnest, he would be simple in his address,—not patronising in his air, telling the people that he intended to explain in order that they might understand,—a most offensive method, especially

with poor congregations,—but so simple as to shew them that he understood his subject and could teach them. To such congregations, moreover, he must carry the gospel, or he will have but few hearers. And thus a habit is formed in early life of composing simple sermons, full of Christ and of the leading truths of redemption; and if the mind be sanctified by God's Spirit, it lays the ground of much future usefulness. Of course, the first efforts of young men in the pulpit will be feeble, and perhaps embarrassed; but public speaking will be wonderfully strengthened and improved by habit, if a man will take ordinary pains with his voice and manner—how much more, when, like all who wish to excel, he takes extraordinary pains, and fills his soul brimful of the glories of gospel grace! Poor people are quite as good judges of preaching as the rich; they have not so many crotchets —they welcome the consolations of Christ—they speak their mind more freely, and often more tenderly—and are more sympathising. In their houses the student is honoured, while by some of the upper classes he is scarcely tolerated. With them the joyous song of praise, and the pleading voice of prayer, are welcomed, prized, and delighted in; while in ranks above, etiquette often forbids both. Many of my most precious hours between services, in visits to the sick, in conversation and devotion, have been spent in the cottages of the intelligent Christian poor, listening to their remarks on what they had heard—not always complimentary to the preacher —but faithful, and to the point; and hearing them speak of the dealings of God's providence with them, and of His answers to their prayers. I remember one incident, which at the time had to me much interest in it. I had been preaching at

Stansted, and, after sermon, visited a house where affliction had entered like a flood. The daughter who had requested me to call was confined with a white swelling on her knee, her sister had a cancer, her mother was prostrate with fever, and, to fill up the measure of their calamities, the father, the only other member of the family at home, had been brought home the previous day with a broken leg. After reading the 30th Psalm, and praying with them, I inquired of the eldest sister what means of support they had. 'None now, sir,' she replied, 'since my father was brought home; but though we have been long in heavy affliction, we have always been supplied, and I do not doubt it will be so now.' I gave her all the silver I had; and thinking, I presume, that students had not much to give away in charity, she hesitated, and begged that I would keep it, as she did not doubt that before the day was over some relief would come. However, I left it for her use. Walking across the common on my way home, I began to reflect that it was all the money I had, and that I could not expect more for some time; borrowing I disliked, as it revealed my poverty, and placed me under obligations. Just as I was sending up a prayer to my bountiful Provider, an old farmer, who had heard me that day, and was watching for me at his gate, accosted me, and accompanied me in my walk. 'Your sermon,' said he, 'directed my thoughts to my previous history, and as it will beguile our walk, and illustrate your discourse, I will, if agreeable to you, relate the circumstances.' Of course, I very gladly assented.

"'About forty years ago, I began to rent a considerable farm. For some years all went on prosperously—my crops were good and found a ready market—and my live stock yielded me a

good profit, so that I not only repaid money which I had borrowed to stock my farm, but saved something annually out of my income. I began to think that "my mountain stood strong." I was congratulated by my friends. By her prudence and piety, my thrifty wife made my house one of the happiest. My six children, none of whom ever caused me grief, and four of whom were truly pious, cheered me with the hope that they would be a blessing in their generation. I was respected and honoured by all who knew me. For many years I had been a deacon of the Congregational church at H——, and was able to contribute liberally to God's cause, and to assist in the spiritual duties of the church.

"'Unexpected reverses came. All at once everything appeared to go wrong. One of my sons took to drinking, and became a grief and a curse to me. A daughter, the most beautiful of the family, made an unfortunate choice, and married a carter—a dissolute, ignorant man, who died within three years, leaving her a widow with two children, and expecting a third, all of whom came to me for support. Two of my daughters were smitten with fever, and were reduced to the last extremity; and, through anxiety and fatigue, my wife was prostrated, and confined to her bed. The fever was considered to be so contagious that we could get no one to attend to the sick, who were left, therefore, to the doctor and myself. A person to whom I had lent money left the village, and never paid me. These circumstances greatly reduced our means. Then, as soon as health returned to our house, a murrain seized my cattle, and I lost nearly all. A bad harvest followed. My crops were literally washed away. Like Job, I sat speechless, and wondered what the

end would be. My dear wife died broken-hearted, and I was left a widower, not only penniless, but in debt. Where to obtain relief I knew not, especially as many of my neighbours had severely suffered. In the midst of my distress a writ was issued against me, and nothing but a prison stood before me. God, I knew, was a hearer of prayer, as I had often proved; but the blows of adversity had so stunned me, that I could offer only a few broken sentences, asking my Father in heaven—my only Friend—to interfere for me. The day before the writ was to be executed, a stranger walked into my house, and introducing himself by name, said that he had walked some miles to see me. "First," said he, "give me a jug of your home-brewed." "Alas!" said I, "I have none." "No!" said he, with surprise; "then give me a glass of milk." I told him that my cows were all dead. With considerable emotion at my haggard appearance, he inquired the cause of the change that he witnessed in me, and in my once flourishing farm. He listened patiently and with deep interest to my statement; and, when I had finished, he asked, "Do you remember a lad of the name of B—— whom you once advised and befriended?" "I do." "Do you know what has become of him?" "No. I heard that he went to sea some time after." "Yes," he replied, "he went to Spain; and, through the assistance that you rendered to him, he acquired property, and has now returned to his native land; and God has sent him to help you in your trouble." Then taking out of his pocket-book a cheque, he filled it up for £1000, and gave it to me. "Accept that," he said, "as a proof of my gratitude; and if you want more, you shall have it." And before I could even attempt to express

my surprise and thankfulness, he said, "Now let us both return thanks to God." And kneeling down, he poured out his heart for me and for my three remaining children to Jehovah-jireh, in strains that to me were such as I never again expect to hear on earth. His munificent gift enabled me to pay my debts, and to take the farm which I now occupy, and where, through the goodness of God, my latter end has been better than my beginning.'

"To an inexperienced and almost penniless youth, this little history was very surprising and encouraging. It seemed to assure me that my heavenly Friend would give me sufficient for my day; and I returned to my room in the college, filled with joy and peace in believing. On the following Wednesday I received a parcel containing three volumes of 'Witsius on the Covenants,' a piece of fine French cloth for a suit of clothes, three golden guineas, and several minor articles of considerable value to me. It contained no note, nor anything to indicate whence it had come; nor could I discover any clue to the donor. For twenty-six years I was ignorant of my sympathising friend, but a singular circumstance made him known to me. A member of the church at Surrey Chapel had been guilty of an act which the elders of the church thought ought to be a matter of church investigation and discipline. He acknowledged his guilt; and it was determined that he must be cut off from the fellowship of the church. When I informed him of the result of the investigation, he said, 'It is just; and for the honour of the church no other course could be pursued. But I part from you with deep sorrow; for I was one of a little band who received, I trust—although I have now fallen—

the gospel from your lips when you were a student. Till this sad yielding to temptation, I have lived and walked with God, and I trust that He has pardoned and restored my soul. Do you remember receiving a parcel'—the contents of which he described—'when you were a student at Cheshunt?' 'Certainly I do,' I replied; 'and I could never learn to whom I was indebted for it.' 'I sent it,' said he, 'simply as a token of my gratitude; and when you came to Surrey Chapel, I became a member of your church.' I was much affected by this discovery under such painful circumstances, and could only commend him to the care of the Good Shepherd, who, by his means, had so fully and so seasonably supplied my wants.

CHAPTER VII.

"THE first time I preached in London was in Hare Court Chapel, Aldersgate Street, where there was then a respectable congregation. Mr Stodhart had been announced to preach, and had requested me to take his place on account of his indisposition. When I entered the vestry, I announced myself as Mr Stodhart's substitute. The old minister—Mr Webb—a grave, pleasant-looking man, with snowy locks, asked me my name, and whence I came. I told him, 'Cheshunt College.' He replied, 'I do not agree with the doctrines usually preached by the ministers and students educated there.' I expressed my regret that I had come, and reminded him that Mr Stodhart was educated there, and that I would instantly retire, as my appearing there at all

was only a friendly act towards my former minister, whose illness prevented his fulfilling his engagement. The old man did not, however, wish to preach himself. He therefore pursued his examination, and asked how long I had been at college. When I told him, he exclaimed, 'Only a year! Young men are sent out to preach far too soon, sir. They should gain more knowledge before they attempt to teach others.' 'I perfectly agree with you, sir,' said I, 'and wish you a good afternoon.' 'No, you must preach now; and I trust God will help you.' The deacons then came forward, and begged of me to serve them. Their minister had not been pleased with students, some of them having made very feeble attempts; and, as the congregation was smaller than formerly, it was necessary to secure effective preachers if possible to revive it. Without further controversy, I consented to preach. The previous week had been to me a season of great mental depression, and this reception had not improved my nervous state. I ascended the pulpit in great distress. I read the chapter in which Asa says, 'We have no might to go against this great company, but our eyes are upon thee.' And after prayer, in which I especially commended to God the good old minister, I took as my text Job xxiii. 10, 'But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.' At the commencement of the discourse I was dull, and to my own sensations making little impression. But when I came to describe God's knowledge of our way, implying His appointment and superintendence of it, and His companionship with us in it, and the refining process which would surely be the result, I turned round to address the audience,

and to my surprise saw the jealous old minister affected to tears. That sermon met his troubled state, and revived his drooping spirits. Many, indeed, in the assembly were that day met by a message from heaven, especially in the application of the sermon, where I tried to win their hearts to confidence in their reconciled God. When I returned to the vestry, the old minister was the first to welcome me, and taking my hand between both his, said, 'Forgive my rude reception. It will, perhaps, be enough to tell you that God has made you a "son of consolation" to a greatly tried spirit. I forgot the injunction, of which I doubt not there is much need, "Let no man despise thy youth."' We became friends from that hour until his death.

"Some young men, perhaps, need to be cautioned not to despise their own youth. It is not, perhaps, a frequent failing; but some tender spirits, troubled by a conviction of weakness and insufficiency, need encouragement.

"I went to the house of one of the deacons to tea, who spake of the sermon 'as sent for him.' I prayed with his family; and two daughters, then children, when some years after uniting with the church, ascribed their conversion to the impressions then produced: so that it may sometimes be that the service begun under a cloud may end in sunshine.

"During the vacation of 1817, it was thought desirable by the trustees that I should visit Yarmouth and Norwich, and endeavour to revive the congregations in those places, which had sunk very low. I was at Yarmouth six weeks, and with some success. The congregations increased, but there were few lay helpers to keep the work alive; and I fear that,

with the exception of a few souls brought to Christ, little permanent good was done. At Norwich it was different; a gracious influence accompanied the ministry of the word. The old and capacious Tabernacle was filled to overflowing. The young especially were impressed with a sense of their condition. The parsonage-house which adjoined the chapel was often filled with persons anxious to converse with me about the way of salvation. The older Christians also rejoiced; it seemed as if manna fell for all the host, and young and old partook the angelic food. During the subsequent course of my ministry in various parts of the kingdom, I have met men and women who referred to that precious season as the time when their hearts were given to Christ; some of these are members at Surrey Chapel to this day. Wearied in body, but refreshed in spirit, and anew determined to devote myself to the service of my blessed Master, I returned to college, singing in my heart, 'I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.'

"The remainder of my time at college was spent as industriously as the fatigue of services, and the time required for preparing for them, would allow. For although a new sermon was not required for every preaching, yet if it was to produce effect upon a fresh audience, the old sermon must be preached with new affections, and these cannot be excited save by much time spent in meditation and prayer. I spent only three sessions in my *alma mater*, and left it very unfitted for the prosecution of my ministerial work.

Elder ministers and committees of colleges should, I think, be very cautious how they advise young men with popular preaching talents to leave college before their curriculum of study is fully finished. What would I not afterwards have given for the precious opportunity of acquiring knowledge which college affords, and which, for me, had passed away for ever! Let no student delude himself by thinking that by personal industry in his pastorate, he can compensate himself and his people for what in his college course he lost by indolence, or by leaving it before it was finished. Only by adequate college preparation, and by keeping up with the reading of his age, can the man of God be thoroughly furnished. Other work will claim his ministerial attention, especially in this working age for pastors, and it will be well for him if he be equal to its demands. Whatever may be urged for the immediate efforts of unfurnished minds, by persons who are affected by the miserable condition of the heathen abroad, or of the heathen at home, the fact is indubitable, that Jesus Christ, who knew the misery of souls better than they, did not begin His ministry till He was thirty years of age, although it was to continue only for three years and a-half. Nor did John the forerunner begin his until he too was thirty, although his Master knew that it was to last not more than a twelvemonth. For the struggles, the mental conflicts, the humiliations which unfurnished ministers endure, no popularity, or readiness of utterance, or amount of labour, can compensate. In my own case, perhaps, it was necessary discipline. It kept me dependent upon the divine arm, and caused me, especially latterly, to prepare with greater care. That my early en-

gagements were of the Lord I do not doubt: I thought that I heard His voice calling me into the field, and desired to obey it and He gave to my feeble efforts both His sanction and His benediction. Still I might have done more had I been better qualified. Notwithstanding my firm conviction that it is not by the might of human learning, nor by the power of human eloquence, that souls are converted, but by the Spirit of the Lord; yet, from the evidence of history, and from the experience of living men, I cannot but be persuaded that, other things being equal, a well-furnished mind will do more work for God, and do it more easily, than another with more scanty acquirements. After delivering one of the orations at the anniversary of the college, on 'the communion of the Holy Ghost,' I left the walls of the college, to go forth to active service for my gracious Master, with the benedictions of my friends. I look back to that period as one of severe conflict and of Divine favour. Yet the three sessions that I spent there yielded fruit. I was stripped of vain-glorying, and humbled, often to the very dust, with the feeling of insufficiency. God's grace was displayed in my weakness, and caused constant thankfulness to Him. Oh that I were as grateful as my Saviour was bountiful to the most unworthy of His servants!"

CHAPTER VIII.

COLLEGIATE education amongst Nonconformists has greatly improved during the last forty years. Not only has it advanced with the advancing intelligence of the age, but

relatively it is far in advance of the advancing standard of the last generation. A higher and broader conception of ministerial qualification has obtained; the half-avowed, half-concealed fanaticism, which held that a minister's spiritual power will be in proportion to his intellectual feebleness and ignorance, has been utterly exploded. A truer philosophy now recognises the great law, that God employs, and not supersedes, all forms and degrees of human power that are consecrated to Him. It is true that God has no need of our learning; but still less need has He of our ignorance. It is true, too, that sanctified, consecrated men have achieved great spiritual results, in spite of educational defects, and even of intellectual feebleness; while greatly endowed men, lacking such consecration, have done but little. But no comparison could be more fallacious than this; and yet upon such comparisons most of the fanatical denunciations of an educated ministry have rested. The true comparison is—between consecrated ignorance and feebleness, and consecrated learning and strength. If, notwithstanding his ignorance, the consecrated man achieved so much, how much more would he have achieved, if, with equal consecration, he had possessed greater resources? With scarcely an exception, the historic men of the Church—the men who have achieved reformations, and been the instruments of great revivals—have been men who had learning and strength to consecrate, as well as piety and zeal. Even in the operations of His grace, God does not reverse or set aside natural laws. Twelve peasant disciples may suffice as witnesses of Christ's life and death and resurrection; but when the Christian Church has to be planted, and Christian theology to be expounded, the learned disciple

of Gamaliel must be called; and even he, to his life-long culture, must add three years of special Christian study, before he begins his ministry. It is true that many a zealous, unsophisticated youth is spoiled by his college education. The fervent, urgent preacher becomes the cold, stiff pedant. But this is only one of many forms of inevitable temptation that a minister is exposed to; and if he have not strength enough to withstand this, he would inevitably have fallen under some other. If, educated, he be a pedant, uneducated he would probably have been a sensualist. A strong man, by God's grace, will be faithful under all forms of temptation; a weak man will not lack temptation to fall under.

One cannot help marvelling at the pious weakness even of such a man as Mr Fletcher, the first president at Trevecca. It is impossible to estimate too highly the precious influence of his seraphic piety. Beyond all question, such meltings of heart and outpourings of prayer, as Mr Benson describes, were invaluable preparations for the work of the ministry. Of the two, the spiritual heart of the minister is of far more importance than the intellectual head. And occasionally, nay even frequently, such meetings with the students as Mr Fletcher's are invaluable in a college. A tutor of such a character, whose social intercourse with his students is thus spiritual and fervent, will mightily help the spiritual preparation that must ever be going on in a true minister's heart; but for such to be almost the only kind of meetings between a theological instructor and his pupils, and that when his very presence with them was only occasional, was surely a great mistake. It was a training for Christians—hardly for ministers. That class-work should be imbued with the spirit

of love and prayer is pre-eminently to be desired; but for prayer and expressions of spiritual feeling to be substituted for the severe study of scientific theology, is a very defective ministerial preparation—a kind of spiritual fanaticism, which has its analogy in the fable of Jupiter and the waggoner. The true devotion of a minister is the devotion which imbues his human effort, not the devotion which is a substitute for it.

The teaching at Cheshunt during Mr Sherman's curriculum was far from efficient, even for those days. The theological tutor seems to have had but very little fitness for his office. It indicates a sad lack of discretion to appoint a student of three months' standing, however promising and able, to preach a public thanksgiving sermon; and no degree of popularity or usefulness should have been permitted to entangle a youth of nineteen in preaching-engagements so numerous that his theological studies were pursued only as preachings and preparations left time for them. The tutor, it is to be feared, had but little theology to teach; but assuredly every hour of the short three sessions which this uncultured youth spent at college should have been devoted to the acquisition of knowledge, and to the severe discipline of his mental faculties. Great and good and useful as Mr Sherman was, no one who knew him can doubt that such a discipline would have greatly augmented his usefulness. No fear that such a man would lose his fervour. The occasional preaching, which is so invaluable an element of Nonconforming college life, would have kept alive his spiritual sympathies, while severer study would have strengthened and developed his powers; and the fervent, loving, practical

James Sherman might have become a Doddridge or a Baxter, a Henry or a Flavel. From Bernard to Fénelon, from the apostle Paul to Bengel, the history of the Church is full of instances of men in whom the intensest and most seraphic fervour has been combined with the greatest learning, greatly to their own advantage, and to the gain of the universal Church.

We are glad to think, that in none of our Nonconforming colleges now, would such a course as that of Mr Sherman be permitted, nor would the sanction of the committee be given to so early a termination of a college course. In most of the colleges, the curriculum is now extended to five and six years. In those where the nominal term is still restricted to four years, a fixed standard of classical attainment for entering upon it, and a preparatory year, when necessary, for reaching that standard, virtually extend the college course to five years. And, in the light of the advanced culture and intelligence of our day, who will say that this is a month too much? Impassioned zeal may yearn for the glorious work of preaching the gospel to perishing men. Saul of Tarsus would, no doubt, gladly have begun at once his apostleship, but He who sent him first for three years into comparative retirement knew that premature work is fatal to the highest power and possible achievement of the man.

Of Mr Sherman's spiritual life during his college course, I can find no records. There can, however, be no doubt that the devotional habits which expressed his peculiar emotional religiousness through life would characterise him then. Often would he speak of his college days as days of great

religious joy and profit. It is not always so. College life has its peculiar and distinctive perils. If it shut some temptations out, it shuts others in. Its seclusiveness,—shutting up the student chiefly to the society of young men of his own age and pursuits, and practically excluding him from the refinements and purities of domestic life; the entireness, intensity, and monotony of study; the scientific, rather than religious use of divine truth; official rather than experimental dealing with the most sacred things; temptations to literary ambition, as opposed to practical usefulness; self-disposal of time, with its temptations to indolence and desultoriness, or to frivolous reading;—all these are temptations and perils of student life, which make a college far other than the paradise of piety which onlookers may imagine it. At any rate, it is a paradise not without its serpent. In some degree these temptations are counteracted by college prayer-meetings and Sabbath preachings; but they can be fully guarded against only by a jealous spiritual vigilance, and by the conscientious maintenance of spiritual and earnest devotional habits.

A trifling record of Mr Sherman's college life remained for many years inscribed upon the door of the little summer-house in the corner of the garden:—

> "Ye pleasant flowers and shrubs, adieu;
> No more shall I your sweetness share;
> But with sharp pangs I part from you,
> And this retreat for secret prayer."

Nonconformity.

"This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law."

"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

"That there should be but one form of discipline in all churches, and that imposed by necessity of a commandment and prescript out of the Word of God, is a matter volumes have been compiled of, and therefore cannot receive a brief redargution. I, for my part, do confess, that in revolving the Scriptures, I could never find any such thing; but that God had left the like liberty to the church government as He had done to the civil government, to be varied according to time, and place, and accidents, which nevertheless His high and divine providence doth order and dispose."—*Lord Bacon on the Pacification of the Church.*

MR SHERMAN'S Nonconformity was never of a very vehement or constraining character. At first, as will be seen further on, it was a mere preference, or rather an accidental facility, rather than a reasoned-out conviction. At one period of his ministry, he would have felt no conscientious difficulties in conforming to the Established Church. Later years, however, brought clearer views and more decided convictions, for, in November 1843, he appears as a speaker at a meeting of the "Evangelical Voluntary Church Association," and avows his Nonconformity as an unequivocal principle. In the course of his speech he says, "I never was a fierce politician, and yet I do not participate in the feelings of men who say they have nothing to do with politics. Politics are a part of religion. The Bible is a political book, teaching the true policy which should govern nations, churches, and individuals."

"As it respects endowments, I am no friend to them; on the contrary, I believe that no congregation prospers like that which supports its own minister, and cheerfully aids the cause of God to the utmost of its ability."

"The object of this society is simply to diffuse light in darkness: its design is to shew that Jesus Christ is the sole and lawful Head of His Church, that He has a right to distribute certain laws amongst His subjects for their govern-

ment, and that no individual should presume to alter those laws and make others which are to be binding on my conscience."

"I object, as an individual, to the alliance of the Church with the State, on this ground—viz., the difficulty of the Church in reforming itself. No corporate body ever reforms itself; if it be reformed, it must be from without. The state of the Church of England at this time appears to me to be very alarming; I cannot, as a patriot, look upon it as a State Church without the greatest distress."

"I confess that controversy is not the element of my heart: during the twenty-six years that I have been in the ministry, I have avoided everything which might in any way counteract the spiritual influence of my ministry amongst my people. But while I see the truth of God trampled upon by hundreds of men who protest that we are not ministers of Christ, that we have no right to the sacred office, that all our attempts to preach the gospel are contrary to the doctrine, spirit, and tenor of the Word of God,—it is high time to shake off all indifference, and to lift up, however feebly, our voices against such ungenerous and unscriptural assumption."

Three of Mr Sherman's four pastorates were in churches that would hardly permit themselves to be called Dissenting churches, and that really were such, involuntarily and regretfully. For three years and a-half, he was a minister of Lady Huntingdon's Connexion; for fifteen years, he was the minister of Castle Street, Reading, the congregation of which had seceded from the Establishment on the death of Mr Cadogan; for eighteen years, he was the minister of

Surrey Chapel, built for the ministrations of Rowland Hill; and only for the last eight years of his life, during which he was minister of the Congregational church at Blackheath, was he connected with any organised body of Dissenters. Throughout his official course, therefore, his ministry, although on every ground to be vindicated as legitimate, was yet so far anomalous as to render a few words of explanation appropriate. That this is not unnecessary will appear from the speech already quoted, from the following incident which he mentions in it, and from the fact that to the present day, in clerical speeches, lectures, and pamphlets, in episcopal and archidiaconal charges, in biographies, in Church of England newspapers and periodicals, and even in Bampton Lectures,* Nonconforming ministers and churches are not only denied all legitimacy, but are assailed with the fiercest denunciations, and classed with the enemies of social well-being, good government, and true religion. Necessity is therefore laid upon us to vindicate ourselves.

"What," says Mr Sherman, "is the doctrine of a High Churchman? A friend of mine, whom I love dearly as a Christian brother, and who holds office in the Church, said, in the course of conversation, 'You know I love you.' 'I believe you do,' I replied; 'do you ever pray for me?' 'To be sure I do.' 'Do you ever pray for me, as a minister of Christ, that God would convert souls by my ministry?' 'I think you a very good man.' 'No, no—tell me candidly,

* See Archdeacon Sandford's Bampton Lecture for 1861, in which he says concerning Dissent:—"It has wrought and is working vast and extensive evil, and imperilling, to a fearful extent, the faith, the loyalty, and the moral and religious life of our people."

do you ever pray for me as a Christian minister, that I may be instrumental in converting souls?' 'Why, as to a minister, I can say very little about that; I hope and believe you are a good man, and God may use any means for the conversion of souls; but as to a minister, that is another question.' Now," continues Mr Sherman, "if a friend will honestly tell me that, does it not reveal the secret, that there are many minds who hold precisely the same principles? A short time since two clergymen in my own neighbourhood, who are acquainted with me, and have been accustomed to meet with me, declared in public—before my own people—that I had no right to preach, because I was not a minister of Jesus Christ."

Either such positions are justifiable, or they are not. Either ministers like Rowland Hill and Mr Sherman are to be recognised and commended, as doing God's work in a legitimate and scriptural way; or they are to be apologised for, as good men, whom God recognises in virtue of their sincerity and zeal, notwithstanding their ecclesiastical sins and schisms.

They are to be apologised for, only on the assumption that they violate scriptural principles, or abuse scriptural liberty. If they do neither of these,—if they simply exercise the right of independent action which the law of Christ secures to them,—then, so far from their Nonconformity being an illicit thing, it is every whit as legitimate as the vastest ecclesiastical organisation. The power of traditional assumption and habit is very great; and Nonconformists have too often permitted themselves to assume an attitude of deprecation and apology, where they had every scriptural

and every rational reason for asserting, not only the legitimacy of their ecclesiastical position, but its perfect compatibility with the true unity of the Church of God. Nonconformity must be estimated in its relation to that with which it refuses to symbolise. It may not be too lightly conceded, that every organised system which has grown to vastness, or gained national recognition, may claim the submission of every individual. In itself Nonconformity may sometimes be the highest duty. The three Hebrew youths were Nonconformists in the court of Nebuchadnezzar. The apostles were Nonconformists in Judea. Luther and his followers were Nonconformists in the sixteenth century. Cranmer and the founders of the English Episcopal Church were Nonconformists in the time of Henry VIII. Every man who has suffered as a martyr, or as a witness for discredited truth against organised error, has been a Nonconformist; and such Nonconformity has been the glory of the world. In itself, therefore, Nonconformity is no sin; it may be the highest virtue. Our judgment, therefore, concerning the position of men like Rowland Hill and Mr Sherman is not to be foreclosed by the charge of Nonconformity. The true and only question is, whether their Nonconformity had justifiable reasons in its relation to the Episcopal or to any other existing Church, or in their own honest estimate of its intrinsic character. Dissent may be the product of opposite causes —either of the wanton and lawless spirit of the seceder, or of the arbitrary spirit or unscriptural assumptions of the Church from which he secedes. Few candid students of English ecclesiastical history can hesitate in concluding to which of these causes the great bulk of English Nonconformity is to be attri-

buted. The reluctant dissent of Whitefield, Wesley, Rowland Hill, and the Countess of Huntingdon, is notorious; and no one who knew Mr Sherman can doubt that he would a thousand times rather have agreed with men than differed from them. And, as a rule, this is characteristic of all our Nonconforming churches. In all churches there is a traditional uninquiring acceptance of what is—in all churches there are those who justify themselves in the liberty of mere preference—in all churches there are some who would rather differ than agree; but the great majority of English Nonconformists are such regretfully and of conscientious necessity;—not that they care for Nonconformity to any particular church as such, but that they regret any difference that may lessen the feeling of Christian brotherhood, and mar the efficiency of Christian work.

The churches with which Mr Sherman was ministerially connected strikingly illustrate the causes that have chiefly produced the Protestant Nonconformity of England—viz., the unscriptural pretensions, the intolerant restrictions, and, in past times, the sad and predominant unspiritualness of the National Establishment. In a modified form, almost every abuse that justified Protestant Episcopacy, justified Protestant Nonconformity. Throughout the whole course of church history, indeed, this has been the genesis of Dissent. Unjustifiable schism has been the rare exception, and has almost always fallen into immediate discredit and decay. It needs substantial righteousness and necessity to perpetuate any form of Dissent. As a rule, corrupt and intolerant Churchmen have made Dissenters, and make them still. Were existing Churches spiritual and catholic, successful Dissent would

be practically impossible: the spirituality would deprive it of moral justification; the catholicity would prevent every difference from becoming Dissent—it would recognise the necessary diversities of men's thoughts and sympathies, and thus Dissent would be deprived of all that justifies it, of all that creates sympathy with it, and of all that gives it strength and perpetuity. Why should not provision be made in every church-system for such varieties of spiritual life and effort as, with our individualities of thought and sympathy, are inevitable? Why should not various embodiments of church-life, and various means of church-work, be recognised as possible, and welcomed as desirable? Are not most of the divisions of churches to be attributed to their unnatural and unphilosophical laws of rigid uniformity, and to their unwarrantable assumptions of exclusive legitimacy and prerogative? Without either indifference or hypocrisy, men of diversified thought and preference cannot agree in any one ecclesiasticism. Nor does the unity of the Church require that they should. It no more depends upon one uniform ecclesiastical mode, than the unity of the nation does upon one uniform family habit, or the unity of the army upon one uniform regimental regulation. Episcopacy, even in its highest forms of ritualism, may be the best form of church-life for one class or state of society—Presbyterianism for another—Congregationalism for another. The common doctrinal principles and social liberties of the Church may, both wisely and lawfully, embody themselves in any one of these diversified forms, or in others, according to the preferences or expediences of a community. The singular absence of ecclesiastical legislation from the New

Testament seems to indicate the wise provision of the great Head of the Church for the subjective diversity of men. Why, then, not fully recognise and make provision for it? Uniformity is no more the necessary maintenance of unity, than diversity is the necessary breach of it. Nay, is it not the very highest manifestation of essential unity for different forms of ecclesiastical and social life to be fully and freely recognised, while a perfect brotherhood of affection is maintained? Essential unity is secured—all that we are taught and need care to pray for—when a catholic charity recognises every form of true spiritual life as legitimate, and when, whatever their ecclesiastical diversities, all true disciples of Christ are one in their fervent brotherly love, and in their common practical service. The attempt to make all men think alike, and to bring them into one ecclesiastical organisation, is as vain as its success would be undesirable. And whether is better—the honest and acknowledged diversities of Protestantism, or the equal but unacknowledged diversities of Romanism? Is it not better, then, honestly to confess the practical necessity of various ecclesiastical organisations, fully to recognise their equal legitimacy, and earnestly to bend all our practical efforts to the perfecting of our brotherly love and our common usefulness?

And will it not be well for those who are so loud in their denunciations of all dissent, as such, to remember that intolerance always strengthens that which it seeks to destroy; that the more strenuously prerogative is asserted, the more keenly it will be questioned and resisted? Even the spiritual corruption of a Church would not necessitate dissent, if its more faithful and earnest men were freely permitted to

labour within it for its restoration; but it is the fatal curse of corrupt Churches, that corruption and intolerance are judicially linked together. The intolerance of Rome created ecclesiastical Protestantism. The intolerance of 1662 supplied English Nonconformity with its largest single contribution, doubling the strength of Puritan Independence. The intolerance of the eighteenth century made Whitefield and Wesley, with the myriads of earnest Christians whom they led, reluctant Dissenters. The intolerance of the Church of Scotland created first the dissent of the various sections of Presbyterianism, and ultimately the secession of the Free Church of Scotland—one half of its strength. The practical result of all which has been, that both in England and in Scotland the Established Church consists of only a minority of the people.

From our hearts we wish that predominant Churches would learn this lesson. To dissent is in itself repugnant to every healthy mind, a sorrow to every Christian heart. "Necessity is laid upon us." Certainly, if any persons can be found who love Dissent for its own sake, they can desire nothing better than the intolerance which foolishly ignores them, or the vituperation which unjustly assails them, or the infatuated policy that seeks to impose or retain social disabilities. These are the things which have so rapidly consolidated English Nonconformity, and developed its present amazing strength, and which, if persisted in, will inevitably make the Establishment a very small minority indeed,—if, that is, the lessons of all experience have in them any teaching. The true and only way to weaken Dissent is by spiritual goodness and Christian liberality. The weapons of this warfare, also, are not carnal but spiritual.

In the history of English Protestantism, as indeed of Romanism and Ecclesiasticism generally, almost all the great enterprises for the evangelisation of the world have sprung from dissidents from things established. The tendency of all organised Churches is to become formal. Even Churches whose worship and life are not regulated by written rubrics, are too often in bondage to traditional ones; and in proportion as they become numerous and strong, they become conventional and contented—willing to enjoy their own religious quiet and comfort and respectability, and to trust to the influence of these gradually to leaven and assimilate the outside world. Even bodies of religionists whose origin has been like that of the Wesleyans and the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, lose their distinctive aggressiveness and evangelising character, and become denominations, as established as the Established Church, and as formal and cautious. All this is not only natural, but inevitable; wise men will hardly wish it to be otherwise. Its true lesson to Churches is a lesson of wide, apprehensive liberality towards the inventive and enterprising of their members. In every Church spiritual earnestness will quicken spiritual ingenuity; and while no Church would be wise that lent itself to every ingenious folly that might be proposed to it under the guise of spiritual enterprise, yet every Church has need to beware of its natural tendency to an undue conservatism, and of the danger of unduly opposing the *vis inertiæ* of its established order of things to wise and legitimate Christian enterprise. The Church of England has too often assumed such an attitude—hence nine-tenths of the present Nonconformity of England. It would neither itself do the spiritual work

to be done, nor permit its members to devise for themselves means of doing it—hence the Nonconformity of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, in which Mr Sherman was first a minister—hence the Nonconformity of the church in Reading—and hence the Nonconformity of Surrey Chapel; the loss, however, imparting to the Establishment this compensating benefit, that the reaction of such Nonconformity upon the Church itself has been one of the chief causes of the quickening of its spiritual life and activity.

Early Ministry—Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion.

"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."

"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."

"These things commend and teach. Let no man despise thy youth."

"Those women who laboured with me in the gospel."

"He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth not after me, is not worthy of me."

"He loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue."

CHAPTER I.

THE first years of Mr Sherman's ministry were spent in the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion; a brief account of which, as one of the most remarkable agencies in the evangelical revival of the eighteenth century, may fitly introduce them. We who live now can hardly realise the spiritual change that has taken place in the Established Church, since the Countess of Huntingdon lived, and since Whitefield and Wesley and Rowland Hill, and a score other evangelical, or, as they were then called, methodistical clergymen, preached. The dearth of evangelical teaching in the Church, and the apparent impossibility of restoring it, constrained this little band of awakened and earnest men to become practically Dissenters, while theoretically they remained clergymen of the Establishment. As spiritual men ever will, they cared for the souls of men more than they cared for their own ecclesiastical consistency. Hence the societies which Whitefield and Wesley originated—practically Dissenting churches, while nominally evangelical movements in irregular connexion with the Establishment. As in most cases of Nonconformity, their practice led on to their theory. They did the will of God, and thus they came to know it.* Only

* John vii. 17.

the infatuated unspiritualness and intolerance of the Episcopal Church itself determined and shaped their formal Nonconformity; they were made Dissenters in spite of themselves. Whitefield, Wesley, Fletcher, Venn, Dr Haweis, Rowland Hill, all would gladly have preached their evangelical gospel in their parish churches. They built their chapels reluctantly, and only when this was found to be impossible. At any time during the first years of their preaching, all these leaders of the evangelical movements of the last century, now grown into such mighty powers of Nonconformity, might, by a wise and liberal policy, have been won back into the bosom of the Established Church from which they had been thrust out. They were opposed and persecuted until they had no alternative but their dissent. The next generation, after experience of the blessings of ecclesiastical liberty, became theoretically and by preference what their fathers were only practically and reluctantly. In some few instances, especially amongst our Wesleyan brethren, we still see the occasional manifestations of a desire to maintain the intermediate position that Wesley himself maintained. Some of these ministers indignantly repudiate the designations of Dissent, and yet they cannot claim those of conformity; they ostentatiously, but very illogically, declare their dislike of the one, and their sympathy with the other; while, practically, their catholicities are limited by their own denomination, more than those of many Dissenters whose denomination may be more rigidly defined. Such things, however, are the necessary characteristics of a transition state. Facts have an irresistible logic. The course of events is too strong for our brethren, even as it was for their founder; and in spite of themselves, their dissent

becomes more marked every day. The subordinate position and services of the Wesleyan societies have been relinquished for full services in canonical hours. The societies themselves have become churches, with a full administration of ordinances; their preachers have become ministers, having their own valid ordination. In everything save a resident pastorate, —and to that they appear to be rapidly tending,—they have become as much churches, and of course Nonconforming churches, as the churches of the Congregationalists. Their Presbyterian ecclesiasticism may remove them a long way from the ecclesiasticism of the Congregationalist; but it removes them still farther from the Episcopacy of the Establishment. Until they return to the Establishment which they have left,—and no religious body in England is less likely to do this,—call themselves what they may, they are, and must be, as much Dissenters as any Nonconformist body in the land. So clearly is this seen by the great body of their people, that the affectation of denying that they are Dissenters is already only the tradition of a few.

In like manner, the churches founded by the Countess of Huntingdon, the communion gathered by Rowland Hill in Surrey Chapel, and other congregations gathered upon similar principles, originating at the close of the last century, or the beginning of this,—such as Orange Street Chapel, Islington Chapel, Stockwell Chapel, and Union Chapel, Islington,—have all become virtually, and in some instances nominally, Congregational churches; the use of the Liturgy in one or two of them being the only remaining indication of their semi-episcopal origin.

When Mr Sherman became one of its ministers, the Con-

nexion of the Countess of Huntingdon retained much of its early vitality and usefulness. At her death, her influence was very great, partly from the chapels she held, and more from those Independent chapels that looked to her students for supplies. She was utterly free from the ambition of founding a sect; all her convictions and sympathies would have protested against it. Her chapels, many of them but leaseholds, were so many several means of preaching Christ's gospel—that was all; just as her college was simply a means of educating men to preach it. Her eye was single, her aim was pure. The wise liberality, therefore, which left her students unfettered, was also extended to the congregations of her different chapels—each was left to determine its own worship, and to manage its own affairs. In a letter to the church at Berkhampstead, dated October 16, 1783, she thus expresses her feeling:—"As to any government in particular, nothing is required but receiving the various ministers as sent, and providing for them, as all other churches do. The services of the Church, our young ordained ministers use or avoid as the congregation may occasionally choose, as thinking it most apostolic to become all things in these matters, so we might save some, and so become weak to the weak. This liberality of principle is intended to destroy those many evils bigotry abounds with, while we boldly and faithfully maintain the converting power of the gospel, as, by Jesus Christ, our only means of salvation."

Another letter to Mr Smith, Mevagissey, Cornwall, dated February 11, 1784, shews her high-minded disinterestedness about the possession and control of chapels:—"I am much obliged by your offer to put into my hands the meeting-

house at Mevagissey, and as a mark of confidence feel obliged; but I should prefer a trust for it, in proper hands, that might continue; and if our ministry is, or has been found useful, a clause might be [inserted] for the security of their reception from our Connexion, whenever those ministers might visit Cornwall."

Her chapels, of course, constituted property, of which, at her death, some disposition was essential. She was desirous, simply and solely, that they should be preserved for the evangelic uses for which they had been purchased or built. The Mortmain Act prevented her providing for this in her will; she therefore devised the expedient of bequeathing them as personal property to four of her friends—viz., Dr Haweis, Mrs Haweis, Lady Ann Erskine, and Mr Lloyd, —giving a direction that they were to possess and enjoy this property free from any restriction or trust whatever: "I relying on the almighty power and good grace of Jesus Christ, my God and Saviour, to dispose their hearts in all things which may tend most to His honour and glory, and the real good of mankind, by the spreading and promoting His glorious and precious gospel as well abroad as at home."

Unfortunately, however, she gave directions for the appointment of successors in case of the death of any of these trustees, which brought the bequest under the disabilities of the Mortmain Act. Legally, therefore, the property was forfeited to Lord Huntingdon, the son and heir-at-law of the Countess, who, however, forbore to assert his claim.

Apart from this forfeiture, the four trustees were the sole and unrestricted possessors of the property, bound only by their Christian honour to consecrate it to such evangelic

uses as, in their judgment, might best promote the glory of Christ. For a number of years after the death of the Countess, the friends to whom she had intrusted her property very conscientiously and efficiently discharged their trust, appointing ministers and managing the property as in their judgment would best promote the glory of Christ. But the ministers, having neither connexional organisation nor ecclesiastical power, not unnaturally became dissatisfied with their position. For this, however, there was no remedy, the four trustees being the sole legal authorities, and their authority being absolute. So matters stood until 1834. In 1805, Dr Haweis, the sole survivor of the first four trustees, conveyed the property to himself and three other trustees. A similar conveyance was effected in 1807, when for the first time a trust-deed was executed, the provisions of which were to the same effect; and from time to time, bequests were made to the trustees for the purposes of the trust, as intended by Lady Huntingdon, and for other specified purposes, until the property became considerable.

In the year 1819, the trustees, desirous it would appear of working harmoniously with the ministers, and of exercising their trust in a manner the most effective for its spiritual ends, invited them to a meeting for conference and prayer, in Spafields Chapel. The meeting was pleasant and profitable, and it was determined that it should be repeated annually; and this was the origin of the Conference of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion.

The ministers, however, continued to be dissatisfied with their anomalous position; but for some years this dissatisfaction found no practical expression, until, in 1834, some

of the ministers thought that the Conference of 1819 had established, on the part of the ministers, a legal right to a participation in the management of the property; and they instituted a suit in Chancery to compel the trustees to submit their accounts to the Conference, and seeking to have it declared that, by the act of 1819, they had really transferred their legal rights to the said Conference. They were in great danger of proving too much, for the investigation of the circumstances in which the trust originated led the Master of the Rolls to express a very decided opinion, that by the statute of Mortmain the whole bequest was void, and that on the decease of the Countess, the property might have been claimed by her heirs-at-law. It was, however, established beyond doubt that the trustees had parted with no legal right, but had called together the ministers simply for conference and prayer.

And thus the matter has stood until the present time. And although, practically, each congregation has for many years been left to choose its own minister, and to determine its own worship; yet, legally, the power to do these things, and to dispose of the property in any way that the interests of religion may seem to them to require, pertains to the four trustees. Of course this is an anomalous state of things, and can hardly be justified on any ecclesiastical principles. It is owing to the anomalous origin of the trust, and is, after all, only a transfer to four individuals of the power which the Countess herself possessed, a power which has its parallel in many of the trust-deeds of Nonconformist places of worship.

CHAPTER II.

THE fortunes of the two great sections of Methodism have been very different, chiefly through the diverse characters of their founders and apostles.

The first Methodist society was formed by Whitefield and Wesley together, in the little chapel in Fetter Lane, now occupied by the Moravians—which was thus the cradle of the entire Methodist body. Lord and Lady Huntingdon became attendants upon the services there, and afterwards upon Whitefield's ministry in the temporary Tabernacle in Moorfields. The erection of the permanent building there, now known by that designation, seems to have originated with the Countess. To the last, however, she was an avowed member of the Establishment, and the zealous patroness of such of its clergy as were evangelical, and of all such agencies as she thought the most likely to spread evangelical doctrine.

Whitefield remained faithful to the Calvinistic articles of the Established Church; Wesley embraced an Arminian creed; and this was the root of the controversy between these two excellent men, which became "exceeding sharp," and which ultimately led to their personal separation, and to the separation of their disciples into the two great branches of Calvinistic and Arminian Methodism.

Lady Huntingdon identified herself with Whitefield and his adherents. He became her domestic chaplain, and held religious services in her drawing-room. She procured for him other drawing-rooms in the houses of the nobility to preach in. Whenever he preached in London, she was amongst

his hearers; and for nearly half a century, she consecrated her property and her energies to the extension of the gospel in connexion with his labours.

Both Whitefield and Wesley were saintly, consecrated, unselfish men—men of transcendent piety and usefulness. Neither was purposely or consciously a sectary, or had the ambition or the thought of founding a "denomination." Wesley, however, possessed far more of practical worldly wisdom than Whitefield. His sagacity never failed him; and, led on step by step—as by the force of circumstances, and by the providence of God, he was—he did, intuitively, the thing which tended to secure his converts and to consolidate his societies; and thus, without purpose on his part, they have become the mighty ecclesiastical structure which we now see them.

These qualities were utterly lacking in Whitefield. In every pure and noble sense of the term, he was an impassioned enthusiast—impulsive, uncalculating, ardent, inspiring. With more of thoughtfulness, or more of calculation, he would have been far less powerful. He was distinctively a preacher of sermons—not so much of sermons to be read, as of sermons to be heard—in every sense an orator—full of enthusiasm, persuasiveness, and passion. His prayers were devotional raptures—his sermons, fervid declamations. Without any wide grasp of theology, he held firmly by the great essential doctrines of the cross; and by these he moved all England, and converted to God thousands, yea, tens of thousands. His work was a sacred passion with him—intense love to God its impulse, and a yearning compassion for the souls of men its characteristic. He had one of

the grandest voices that ever man was endowed with, which could roll like thunder over a congregation of twenty thousand, or melt like a whisper into the ear of a poor trembling bystander. His pathos was irresistible. It not only emptied Franklin's purse, but constrained him to lay under contribution the purses of his neighbours. His dramatic power was wonderful—the coldest and most philosophical were carried away by it. Not only did men like Garrick laugh or weep under its influence, but men like Lord Chesterfield were entranced by it. The well-known anecdote that illustrates this scarcely needs to be repeated. Lord Chesterfield was listening to Whitefield in Lady Huntingdon's pew in the Spafields Chapel. Whitefield was describing the condition of a benighted sinner—the peril in which he walked, the destruction that would befall him. He compared him to a blind beggar on the verge of a precipice. His dog has left him—his trusty staff, striking some projecting stone, flies out of his hand—he stumbles and totters, and then—goes over the precipice. And so highly and so artistically was the description wrought, that, jumping from his seat as if he would arrest the catastrophe, the self-possessed and well-schooled Chesterfield shouted aloud, "Good God! he is gone." The man who could produce such effects must have been a mighty preacher. We know too little of the preachers of the early Church to be able to compare him with them; but surely Chrysostom himself never exceeded this effect. We are perfectly safe, however, in affirming, that while Protestantism may have had hundreds of greater divines, it has never had so great a preacher. His contrast with Wesley was utter—as utter as soul and system, as passion and reason, as the power

of the storm and the power of sunshine. Whitefield was as impetuous as Wesley was calm—as prodigal as Wesley was careful. Whitefield was great in the pulpit, swaying collective masses of men—Wesley was great in the confessional or council-chamber, guiding individual hearts and lives. Whitefield had the power of mighty passion—Wesley of calm, sagacious wisdom. Whitefield was utterly destitute of genius and of patience for ecclesiastical organisation—Wesley was the very incarnation of it. The one was the Luther of Methodism—the other its Calvin. The one created its mighty force—the other guided and organised it.

God's ways are not our ways, or we should be tempted to say, "Had these two remarkable men continued to work together, combining their great and diversified powers—Whitefield's force, and Wesley's formative skill—Whitefield the trumpet-tongued apostle, and Wesley the ecclesiastical statesman—humanly speaking, they would have multiplied the result of their labours a hundredfold." It may, however, have been best as it was. The most healthy conditions of Christian work may be the brotherly emulation of various churches rather than the overpowering organisation of one. Throughout the entire history of the Church, the tendency of great, unchallenged ecclesiasticisms has been to stagnate and become despotic; so that, sooner or later, it has needed separation or schism to quicken them and provoke them to self-sacrificing service.

In many possible ways, therefore, the separation of Whitefield and Wesley, painful as it was, may, on the whole, have promoted the diffusion and spiritual efficiency of their doctrines. Without the emulations of the severing parties, often

as they approximated to unseemly strifes, who shall say into what contented self-complacency and inertness the movement might not have fallen? We see the evils of separation —we do not see the evils of its opposite. Nor may we conclude that from an opposite state of things all evils would have been excluded. As it is, the great evangelical impulse diffused itself both within the Establishment and without—amongst those whose constitutional sympathies were with Calvinistic doctrine, and amongst those whose constitutional sympathies were with Arminian. It is, however, interesting to mark how the greater fervour was with the more philosophic theology, and the greater coolness with the more empirical.

Whitefield left the mighty effects of his ministry to expand into a vague evangelical influence, and his converts to diffuse themselves amongst other religious communities. He scattered the living embers everywhere, while Wesley heaped them into a mighty blaze; but who shall say what igniting power these scattered embers carried with them, what spiritual life, what holy zeal they quickened both in the existing churches of Nonconformity and in the congregations of the Establishment? There can be no doubt that the wonderful revival of spiritual life in both is to be attributed to the evangelical movement which Whitefield and Wesley led. Dare we, then, say that the spiritual result of Whitefield's ministry is less, nay, that it is not more, than it would have been could he have gathered all his converts into one visible organisation, even had that become the greatest amongst us? Are not spiritual souls, in all evangelic churches, daily born to this apostolic man? God's spiritual estimates of a man's work will be wonderfully different from our material ones.

Wesley laid the foundations of that great religious denomination, which has slowly spread and consolidated itself, and which is now not a whit behind the chiefest and most honoured Churches of the land. Incalculable are the blessings which it has carried to the more neglected parts of the community. Its devoted and self-sacrificing preachers, especially its army of lay-preachers, have carried the glad tidings of salvation where no man else cared for souls. This was Wesley's way of doing the Master's work—a way that he himself knew not, and a wonderful way it was. The immediate palpable *effects* of Whitefield's ministry far exceeded those of Wesley; but the permanent palpable *results* of Wesley's ministry have far exceeded those of Whitefield's. While Arminian Methodism now numbers its hundreds of thousands—nay, its millions—Calvinistic Methodism, as an organised thing, scarcely exists at all save in the Principality. But who shall say, notwithstanding, which has done the most for Christ? Let but a man work for Christ according to his gifts and opportunities, holily and earnestly, and he may leave the result to Him. He "knoweth not which shall prosper—this or that." "It is God that giveth the increase."

Whitefield declared that he had "no party to be at the head of," and that, "through God's grace, he would have none." He did, however, propose that Lady Huntingdon should do something to gather his converts, and become a kind of lay-bishop to them; while he, discharged of all such cares, should devote himself to the preaching of the gospel. "A leader," says he in a letter to her, "is wanting. This honour hath been put upon your ladyship by the Great Head of the Church: an honour conferred on few, but an

earnest of one to be put upon your ladyship, before men and angels, when time shall be no more." *

How far she became such a leader has been seen. Her liberality was so great that her income was always mortgaged; and she died so poor, that her property was unequal to the discharge of the incumbrances upon her chapels. It was thought, therefore, that some of them should be sold to clear the rest; but to prevent this, her trustees and friends provided what money was necessary, and the chapels were preserved for the purposes for which, with such noble self-denial and simple aims, she had purchased or built them.

Amongst Mr Sherman's papers I find the following letter of Mr Wills to Mr Webber, which is illustrative of the high hand, and sometimes sharp practice, with which the Countess managed her affairs:—

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I have this moment an opportunity of informing you that I have this day received a sudden dismissal (without a moment's warning) from Lady H.'s Connexion, by a letter under her own hand. Time will not permit me to say more than, The will of the Lord be done.—Ever yours, faithfully,

"T. WILLS.

"WHETSTONE, *Tues., Noon,*
July 8. 1788."

* Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon, vol. i., p. 117.

CHAPTER III.

MR SHERMAN spent the first three and a half years of his ministry in the Countess's Connexion. According to the then practice of its ministers, he supplied different chapels at the invitation of the people, and with the consent of the trustees, preaching at each for a longer or shorter period as might seem desirable. He was ordained to the ministry, together with his friend and fellow-student, the late Rev. John Owen of Bath, in Sion Chapel, Whitechapel, on the 26th of November 1818. The usual method of Congregational ordinations was followed, save that he was ordained to the Christian ministry, and not to any specific pastoral charge. Nonconformists claim a valid ordination. They boast not of apostolic succession in any sacerdotal sense,—a boast that cannot be verified in any Church, and that, if it could, would be of no spiritual value. They claim to stand only in spiritual succession. They practise imposition of hands—that most ancient and beautiful of all symbolical practices in the Church—by brethren already devoted to ministerial work. They do not regard this as conferring ministerial office, for, if conferred at all, it is, they deem, of divine bestowment; they can neither make nor unmake a minister of Jesus Christ. But they regard the practice as a recognition of what they believe the Holy Ghost to have done, and as declaring their human assent to the divine calling; and they accompany it with holy advices and prayers. The service is simple and solemn. After the reading of suitable scriptures, and invocation of the divine presence, the "Introductory Dis-

course" is delivered. This is an exposition of New Testament teachings concerning a Christian Church. Then questions are put to the newly-appointed pastor, to elicit a declaration of his views concerning the character and purposes of his ministry, and also of his theological beliefs, that both the churches and the ministers may be satisfied concerning his piety and his soundness in the faith. The "Ordination Prayer" follows, with the imposition of hands, some father in the gospel invoking for the young minister the baptism of the Holy Ghost, with all the gifts and conditions of physical, intellectual, and spiritual life which are essential to an efficient ministry. Then follows the "Charge," a discourse on the character and duties of the Christian minister, addressed directly to the minister ordained. Then—usually in the evening of the day—a sermon is addressed to the church, setting forth its obligations to its pastor. Nothing can be more simple—nothing more complete. The ecclesiasticism, the ministerial office, the practical duties of the church, are expounded, each in a separate address, and the church and its pastor are solemnly commended to God. There is neither priestly assumption nor unbecoming indifference; but solemn teachings, urgencies, and prayers. At Mr Sherman's ordination the introductory discourse was delivered by his pastor, the Rev. Mr Stodhart, who also received from the young ministers their "confession of faith." The ordination prayer was offered by the Rev. John James, president of Cheshunt College; the charge being addressed to them by the Rev. J. J. Richards, from Jonah iii. 2, "Preach the preaching I bid thee." The Rev. T. Williams of Stepney and the Rev. G. D. Owen also took part in the service.

His own account of this period is as follows:—

"To a thoughtful mind, starting in life is necessarily a matter of considerable anxiety, especially if a man has no friends but those whom his own energies and talents make. Our little family felt this. Their only son, and only child, was now about to commence life, to be for the first time independent of their aid.

"I had received an invitation to spend the vacation at Plymouth Dock. Princes Street Chapel had then a very large and influential congregation, and I thought it a great honour and responsibility to be invited to preach for six weeks to such a people. My parents shared in my anxieties. Therefore, the evening before I left by the mail, we met in our little cottage for special prayer. My father commended me to the care of the Great Shepherd, in most appropriate language, and with great fervour of spirit; and ere we rose from our knees, asked me to continue the supplications. The prayers of that hour were surely heard in heaven, and they greatly cheered my heart in leaving home.

"My journey occurred in the midst of a contested election, when party feeling ran very high. In some places relays of horses could not be obtained, so that I did not arrive in Devonport until mid-day on Saturday. The fatigue of the journey did not assist my Sabbath labours; but this passed off after the first service. The congregations increased until there was scarcely standing room; and although I cannot affirm any unusual influences attending any one of the services, the impression made by the ministry was beneficial to many, and, as I had reason afterwards to know, was abiding.

"Thence I went to the Countess of Huntingdon's chapel at Bath, which, at that period of its history, was in a most flourishing state. There were some old men, members of the congregation, who had known the Countess herself, and still retained a little of the fire which that holy and self-denying woman had enkindled amongst them. Very heartily was I welcomed amongst them. Crowds filled the chapel—many precious souls were converted to God—and a gracious revival of godliness was the result. On the Sunday evening the rush to get into the place was often terrible; and 'the throne,' as it was called,—a large enclosed and carpeted space round the pulpit,—was often occupied by ministers and clergymen, and fashionable invalids who had resorted to Bath for the benefit of the waters. A debt existed, for the liquidation of which I collected money from the visitors and friends, and had the pleasure of seeing it extinguished. In addition to the spiritual good which a gracious God made me the means of, I had reason to be thankful for some important lessons which I learned during the three months that I resided there. A barrister of fortune—Mr John Bull—and his wife resided next door to the chapel, and were peculiarly kind, exercising over me an almost parental care. Every Sunday evening some delicacy for my supper was sent to the chapel house, and whatever was thought beneficial for my somewhat sickly frame was provided for me. Mr Bull was remarkable for his wit; and, though never offensively, he managed very adroitly to correct little faults of manner or slips of the tongue. While I have roared with laughter at his reproductions of my pulpit action and sentences, yet I never failed to profit by them. A

young man who meets with such a friend, at once wise, and kind, and faithful, should count him beyond price; for he will often correct little things which, uncorrected, would grow into offensive mannerisms. It is doubtless often galling to pride, and very humiliating, to be corrected for pulpit peculiarities; and some who attempt the task are utterly incompetent, and not to be tolerated in their ignorance and impertinence; and yet better take a hint from the veriest clown than indulge a habit which may obstruct the entrance of truth into the minds of hearers.

"An elderly widow lady, a member of the congregation, taking compassion upon my youth and loneliness, thought that I should be better cared for in her house than I was in the parsonage. She was a good woman, and always ready to consecrate her property to God's cause, and my friends thought that I had better accept her proffer. But there was in her, and in her establishment, a love of pomp that did not suit my taste, although it was more common then than it is now. She drove four horses in her carriage, and it did not seem to me to be quite in character to be driving about with her, so far removed from most of the people to whom I preached. Like many persons of her rank and station, she did not like, and would not attend prayer-meetings. Dining late, she commonly, in the summer months, took a drive just at that hour; and I sometimes found it difficult to refuse to accompany her, even while the people were meeting to pray that God would bless me and my ministry. The first time that I did so, my conscience flogged me severely—the second, we passed the people leaving the chapel as we were returning home, and the reproving glance that I caught from many an

eye seemed as if meant to say, 'What doest thou here, Elijah?' From that hour, I resolved never to sacrifice duty in the service of the sanctuary to pleasure; and in carrying out that resolution I have found an ample reward. Nor will those whose opinion is of any value be long offended with the man who, at some sacrifice, does what he believes to be the work of God.

"An incident occurred at Bath which was attended with painful consequences, which, but for the restraining power of God, might have been worse. I was on my way to preach on the Thursday evening, and while walking up Milsom Street, a young man without a hat ran out of a shop and linked his arm in mine, saying, 'I shall have great pleasure in walking with you.' Seeing by the fire of his eyes that he was greatly excited, I presumed that he was either delirious through fever or a confirmed lunatic. I was afraid of thwarting him, but more afraid of his companionship. Suddenly he left me, saying, 'It looks like rain; I will go into this shop, and borrow an umbrella.' But I had not gone very far when he came after me, and again linking his arm in mine, seemed disposed to be mischievous. I entreated him to leave me. There were no police at that time, but I mustered courage to say that if he did not leave me I should be obliged to call for help, and give him a night's lodgings. 'Indeed,' he replied; 'if you will give me a night's lodgings, I will go home with you.' The York House coach from London had just arrived, which he did not appear willing to pass, and, suddenly withdrawing his arm, he struck me a violent blow on the back of the neck, which felled me to the ground. When I recovered myself, I saw him danc-

ing at a distance, and several persons looking on, apparently enjoying the fun. I was not much the worse, and made my way to the chapel. The text that night was, 'Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?' In proving the necessity of Christ's sufferings, I quoted His reply to Peter, 'Get thee behind me, Satan,' &c., and immediately heard a deep, unearthly groan. Looking in the direction whence it came, I saw my lunatic friend leaning over the front of the gallery, on my right hand. I became confused, and again repeated the quotation. I requested the pew-opener to remove him. Springing backwards, he stamped and roared out at the highest pitch of his voice, 'What! did you think that I was the devil, then? What! did you think that I was the devil, then?' He was immediately secured; but the confusion, screaming, and fainting which followed were most painful to witness. To drown the noise and still the people, I requested the organist to play a 'voluntary.' Before he could do so, my old friend John Bull, with a silk cap on his head, and a neckerchief round his throat, leaving only his eyes and his nose visible, rushed to the foot of the pulpit-stairs and cried out, 'Sherman, come down; he'll shoot you! Come down, I say!' I assured him that I was in no danger, and as soon as possible dismissed the congregation. The unhappy lunatic was secured for the night, and afterwards sent to Dr Fox's. I regret to add, however, that a few days afterwards, a lady who was in the congregation died from the fright occasioned by his violence.

"On the whole, I believe that this visit to Bath was productive of much spiritual benefit to myself, as well as, I

trust, to others. It threw me among a class of persons whose habits tended to form mine, and whose spirituality was a help to my Christian life. Presumption received more than one check because of ill-prepared sermons. During the latter part of my visit, special marks of attention and affection were shewn me by the people; this was partly in expression of their sympathy with me in an accident that befell me. Entering the house of a lady one day, while collecting for the paying off the debt on the chapel, a dog flew at me, and fastened his teeth in my thigh. I shook him off with some difficulty; and, not experiencing much pain, I prosecuted my work until the evening. On retiring to rest, however, I found the wound surrounded with small white pustules, and exhibiting a very inflamed appearance. Rather alarmed, I went to a surgeon in the Vineyards, who, on looking at it, said, 'If that were in my flesh, I would have it out immediately.' 'Take your knife, then,' I said, 'and allow me no time for reflection.' He cut out a piece as large as a florin, and directed me to confine myself to the sofa. I continued to preach, however, sitting; and, though for five or six weeks very nervous as to the possible results, nothing injurious ensued. It drew out towards me, however, a large amount of sympathy, and gave me a little rest from extra-parochial labours, which benefited my general health.

"After my term at Bath had expired, I was appointed to the Countess of Huntingdon's chapel at Bristol. It was then a small place on St Augustine's Bank, very conveniently situated for a congregation, which, through neglect, had sunk very low in numbers. Like the chapel in Bath, it had an interesting history; its ministers, from the times of Whitefield,

taking part in efforts for a revival of religion. After the first Sunday, the chapel began to fill, and very soon not a sitting was to be obtained; and on missionary and other special occasions, the chapel was crowded long before the time of service. There was an unction accompanying the preaching here, more marked than at Bath. Many unconverted persons were awakened; private meetings with persons anxious to be saved revealed a state of things to which I had previously been a stranger. One intelligent and ladylike person acknowledged to me a state of concubinage, which had been maintained for years. Happily the spell was broken. A separation took place—she became repentant, and useful to others. None, however, knew the case except her immediate connexions and myself.

"Another case was that of a man guilty of many excesses, whose remorse of conscience became so insupportable that, after hearing the Word a few Sabbaths, he determined one Sunday morning to throw himself into the Float. His resolution failed, and he threw himself into the chapel just as the text was announced, 'Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.' Contrary to my ordinary custom, I repeated the last sentence, and then said, 'Perhaps some one in this assembly may be tempting God by haste—hasting to other places of safety—hasting to conclusions of despondency or despair—hasting to destroy himself.' Then pausing, I said, 'Behold, O despondING soul, a safe and blessed foundation upon which thy hope may rest.' His attention was arrested, and the good Spirit so quickened his faith, that, as he told me in the vestry after

service, with tears of joy, 'I placed my feet upon the atonement of Christ, and found rest to my soul.' Other cases, equally striking, occurred, the particulars of which I have now forgotten, but they wonderfully encouraged me to preach a full and practical gospel.

"I had also much success amongst the young. The parents of the late Mr Sortain of Brighton were attendants at the chapel, and, from my first service there, became my warm friends. The father was a man of sound sense, and was invaluable to a young man, as an adviser. The mother added to the charms of singular beauty, a kindness of heart which made her house like a home, and there I spent many leisure hours. The children were admirably trained, and religion pervaded the ordinary transactions of life. Young Sortain, then a handsome boy about nine years old, often came with messages to me, and these opportunities I often turned into pleasing seasons of religious inquiry and teaching. Having gained his confidence and love, I, one morning, after I had been some months in Bristol, took him into my little study, and, giving him one of Bagster's newly-published Bibles, commended him to God in solemn prayer. At his ordination at Brighton, he stated that that was the more special occasion when the Spirit of God wrought on his soul, and led him to determine that from that hour he would love and serve Christ. Yet I never knew the effect of that private service until he publicly mentioned it. Oh, what blessed revelations will be made at the last day to many desponding ministers, of souls who have been born to God through their quiet and unostentatious teaching!"

Mr Sortain always regarded Mr Sherman as his spiritual father. In one of his characteristic letters, written to Mr Sherman in 1856, he says, concerning a young minister whom he wished to introduce to a pastoral charge:—

"As you are my dear 'Metropolitan,' seeing that I have no living to give away in my diocese, be pleased, I humbly pray your Grace, to interest yourself on behalf of 'my son Timothy,' and see if you cannot help me in introducing him to some church. You will not forget that, as this *protégé* of mine is '*my* son Timothy,' he must be your grandson; and, therefore, 'O Paul the aged,' think of thy descendants. . . . . You must know your own flesh and blood. . . . . He is, as your grandson, a much holier and simple-minded man than is your son. He is really a Christian man. . . . . As the culminating point in his favour, he is, and was, and wishes to be, ever in ecclesiastical union with his father and his grand-parent.—Ever yours,

"JOSEPH SORTAIN."

CHAPTER IV.

"THE parsonage was in Trenchard Street, which was anything but an airy and healthy locality. There I was taken seriously ill with fever. Dr Stock, whose remarkable conversion from Socinianism, by the dying conversations of Mr Vernon, was then recent, was my medical attendant, and, under his skilful treatment, I soon recovered; but he prohibited my longer residence at the parsonage. A widowed

lady, at Clifton, welcomed me to her healthy and beautiful abode, and most tenderly watched over my health. Whatever thoughtfulness and kindness could suggest was done for me; and I soon recovered my strength, and became more vigorous than I had felt since leaving college. There I formed an acquaintance with Lady E. King and Lady Adelaide King—the former the sister of Lord Lorton, the latter the youngest daughter of the Earl of Kingston—which soon ripened into friendship.

"Lady E. King devoted her fortune to the support of a residence for ladies of family, whose property had been reduced by vicissitude; and her niece, Lady Adelaide, a sprightly, well-informed young girl, aided and cheered her aunt in her self-denying and thankless work. They welcomed my visits; and many an hour of pleasant and instructive intercourse did I spend in the society of these charming ladies. By them I was introduced to Mrs Hannah More, who not only admitted me as a visitor, but insisted upon my preaching in her drawing-room—which I did to a large company of the gentry, whom she invited for the occasion—assigning as her reason, that as she was now too old to come to me, I must come and preach to her. It was to me a joyous season; and, after the service, she expressed her thanks in a substantial way, by putting into my hands a bank-note for ten pounds, accompanying it with many words of encouragement and wisdom. Mrs Schimmelpenninck was one of my Sabbath-hearers at this chapel, and she found similar work for me in the drawing-rooms of her friends. Though these were additional services, which I sometimes felt to be very arduous, they were valuable in many ways. They in-

troduced me to a class of society from whom I derived much information and confidence.

"To Mr Grant, a surgeon in extensive practice, who afterwards became my brother-in-law, I was greatly indebted. He took an affectionate interest in my ministry, and the spiritual influences of his intercourse with me were very precious. We were seldom long absent from each other, and our friendship terminated only with his early death. Although I mention these persons as great helps to me in my ministry, I would not forget the humbler members of the church and congregation, from many of whom I derived great assistance. My home was amongst them, and I delighted to visit them; and when, in some more exalted in station, the charm of novelty had passed away, they became my fast and enduring friends.

"After labouring about six months in Bristol, my frame, wearied with constant work, demanded a change, and my honoured friend with whom I resided took me a tour round the coast, which strengthened me for further labour. Mr Cappen had erected a chapel at Cheltenham, to which the trustees of the Connexion were anxious that I should go, and endeavour to gather a congregation. Mr Rees of Rodborough, who had opened it, supplied it for a month; but the congregation was small, and needed consolidating. Thither, therefore, I went, accompanied by my friend and her two nieces, who resided with her. I immediately set myself to work, and did more, perhaps, than my strength justified. I read the entire liturgical service, and preached twice on the Sabbath. A Sabbath-school had to be formed, for which, alas! there were no teachers, so I undertook it myself, re-

maining in the school-room from nine o'clock until half-past ten in the morning, and from two until four in the afternoon. Teachers were raised up to help me. I began with ten children; and, after eight months of personal effort, I left above four hundred, with forty teachers. But it was an exhaustive effort. My ministry did not succeed so well there as at Bristol; partly, perhaps, from diminished physical strength through the labours of the school, and partly from the unformed character of the congregation. Having, therefore, erected a parsonage, filled the chapel with hearers, formed a Christian church, and established a flourishing Sunday-school, I thought it best to leave the place to other hands; and as the congregation at Bristol were anxious for my return, I went back to that interesting city.

"After labouring there for about three months, with a success similar to that of my first visit, it pleased God to direct my attention to the lady who afterwards became my wife. Her piety and beauty soon won my heart. During the period of our courtship, an invitation was sent to me to become the pastor of a large and influential congregation at Reading. I had been invited to settle at Norwich, Bath, Cheltenham, and Bristol; but from various causes I felt no decided inclination to remain at any one of these places, except, perhaps, Bristol, and there the overbearance of one ruling spirit made it pretty plain that I must either sacrifice my own opinion of right and wrong, or be ever at war. After consulting Mr Jay, Mr Rowland Hill, and Mr Thorpe, all of whom strongly advised me to go to Reading, I accepted the invitation of the people, first, to supply for six weeks, and then, if they approved my ministry, to become their pastor. In the

interim, I preached for some time—and I had reason to hope with the Divine approbation—at Spafields Chapel, London, where immense congregations attended both on week-days and on the Sabbath; and then at Bath, where renewed 'showers of blessing' accompanied the preaching, and many precious souls 'called Jesus Lord, by the Holy Ghost.'

"It must not be supposed, from the preceding details, that thus far my ministerial life had been unchequered. Though generally very greatly favoured in the pulpit, it was often at the expense of much soul-conflict in private. The struggles of a corrupt nature brought me very low. I found it easier to preach a hundred sermons than to conquer one evil passion. He who seeks to make his preaching and his practice correspond, will have many sacrifices of carnal inclination to make. And if he do not make them, he may certainly calculate upon strong prejudices against him arising in many pious minds—prejudices springing from a 'jealousy for the Lord of hosts,'—sometimes, perhaps, severe and puritanical, but on the whole commendable and beneficial. If, therefore, he will not fight out of the pulpit, he cannot reign in it. This conflict in my soul was often very severe. When the Divine Spirit filled the temple of the body with His influence, any sacrifice could easily be made; but the great difficulty was to obtain this grace. It would not come by cold wishes. It was to be had only at Mercy's door, at which I must be often knocking—in the field of God's truth, where I must be often digging—and on the battle-grounds of life, where every inch of spiritual progress had to be fought for. I often failed; but I bless God that often also I was a conscious victor. My best preparations for the pulpit were

reasonable study, a visit to the sick, and a quarter of an hour with God. How blessed were many of these communings! What a refreshment, vigour, elasticity, and composure they produced! Let him who doubts the process try it, and he will soon be convinced. I bear my humble testimony, that with the contrite spirit God will dwell, reviving it, and giving it courage and confidence for every duty that He may call it to discharge. But there were seasons in my ministerial life when the blood seemed chilled, and the whole man powerless. Unworthiness—inward corruption—intellectual incompetency—unpreparedness—the necessity of constantly appearing before the same people with an old gospel, and no new message from it—all would rise up before the mind like a company of armed men. And in seasons of impaired health, of nervous depression, unkind criticisms, domestic trials and losses, and the backsliding and worldliness of many, once hopeful—they are overwhelming. There is nothing left for a young minister then, but to cast himself on the atonement of Christ, as the ground of his hopes for himself as a sinner, and as the procuring cause of all his ministerial help. Oh, the refreshment and joy that this has given me, especially in these early periods of my ministry! 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' Blessed be God for Jesus Christ!"

Reading.

"And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us."

"When Abraham sate at his tent-door, according to his custom, waiting to entertain strangers, he espied an old man stooping and leaning on his staff, weary with age and travel, coming towards him, who was an hundred years of age. He received him kindly, washed his feet, provided supper, caused him to sit down; but observing that the old man ate and prayed not, nor begged for a blessing on his meat, asked him why he did not worship the God of heaven? The old man told him he worshipped the fire only, and acknowledged no other God; at which answer, Abraham grew so zealously angry, that he thrust the old man out of his tent, and exposed him to all the evils of the night and an unguarded condition. When the old man was gone, God called him, and asked him where the stranger was; he replied, 'I thrust him away, because he did not worship Thee.' God answered, 'I have suffered him these hundred years, though he dishonoured me; and couldest thou not endure him for one night when he gave thee no trouble?' Upon this, saith the story, Abraham fetched him back again, and gave him hospitable entertainment and wise instruction. Go thou and do likewise; and thy charity will be rewarded by the God of Abraham."—*Old Eastern Apologue.*

CHAPTER I.

THE history of the church at Reading, of which Mr Sherman became the pastor, is very interesting, and illustrates not only the religious movements of the last century, but the way in which the various bodies of Nonconformists have been replenished from the Established Church.

The Rev. Wm. Talbot, LL.D., was presented to the vicarage of St Giles's, Reading, about the year 1767. He was a man of great piety and usefulness—one of the noble band of clergymen who gathered round Lady Huntingdon, and originated the revival of evangelical religion, to which, under God, we mainly owe the religious life and enterprise of the nineteenth century. He was one of Lady Huntingdon's field-preachers, and in 1757 was itinerating with Mr Madan in Northamptonshire. "I had," says Hervey, the author of the "Meditations," in a letter to Mr Ryland, "not long ago the favour of a visit from your worthy neighbour, Mr Talbot. He came accompanied by Mr Madan, and both were like men baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire—fervent in spirit, and setting their faces as a flint." His ministry at Reading was greatly blessed by God; those awakened under it being numbered by hundreds.

It pleased God, however, to remove him in the prime of life. He died of a fever at the house of Mr Wilberforce, uncle of the philanthropist, in 1774.

The living being in the gift of the Crown, Lord Bathurst, unexpectedly, and without solicitation, conferred it upon the Hon. and Rev. W. B. Cadogan—the second son of Lord Cadogan of Caversham Park—then a minor, and studying for the Church at Christ Church, Oxford. It is said that Lord Bathurst was on his way to Bath, and not far distant from Caversham, when it suddenly occurred to him to present the vacant vicarage to Lord Cadogan's son. He proceeded at once to Caversham, where, finding the doors open, he made his way to the kitchen, and requested to see Lord Cadogan. The servants seeing a man plainly dressed come to the kitchen, told him that Lord Cadogan was not to be seen. He then asked for paper to write a note to his lordship, and as no one shewed him to a room, he wrote on the kitchen-dresser: "The Lord Chancellor presents compliments to Lord Cadogan, and understanding he has a son in the Church, begs his condescending acceptance of the vicarage of St Giles's, which he has just heard has become vacant." As soon as he was gone, the servants discovered their mistake, and in great trepidation took in the note to their master, who immediately went after the Lord Chancellor, and apologising for the ignorance of his servants, expressed his thankful acceptance of the offer. The Chancellor promised to put the living in sequestration until young Cadogan should come of age and obtain ordination.

The parishioners, to whom religion had become a vital thing, were in great consternation at the course events were

taking. Their only hope was that Mr Cadogan would feel no disposition to take the duties himself, and would continue Mr Hallward in his curacy. In this, however, they were mistaken. Mr Cadogan, although decidedly anti-evangelical, had a conscientious desire to discharge his clerical duties. A petition, very numerously signed, was presented to him when he took possession of the living, praying him to continue to them the services of their beloved curate. This made him very indignant. He haughtily threw it into the fire, and declared that he would not comply with such a petition, even though signed by every individual in his parish. He denounced Mr Hallward as a Methodist, and ignominiously dismissed him, declaring that he should never preach in his pulpit again. The congregation was scattered, large numbers of them taking refuge in the various Dissenting churches of the town. Mrs Talbot, a devout and excellent woman, was visited just at this juncture by her friend, Lady Huntingdon, who gave her valuable counsel, and who hired a large room and opened it for divine worship. By her judicious spirit and bearing, Mrs Talbot did much to calm the excitement of the people; and although at first she provoked in Mr Cadogan much resentment by opening her house for religious services, conducted by Lady Huntingdon's chaplains—Romaine, Shirley, Glascott—and by other evangelical clergymen, such as Newton, Venn, and Rowland Hill, who did not cease to pray for the conversion of Mr Cadogan—yet at length her meekness and wisdom conquered; and, subdued by her loving patience and goodness, he acknowledged himself wrong, and publicly confessed that Mrs Talbot's letters and piety had led him to the saving knowledge

of Christ. This was after he had been two years at Reading; and for two years more he was very timid in avowing to his family and friends his evangelical change. After this, he boldly took up the cross, and became one of the most popular and useful preachers of his day. One of his first acts after his conversion was to send to Mr Hallward, acknowledging the sin and folly of his behaviour to him; and, as he had obtained preferment, and could not return to his curacy, to offer him his house and pulpit and heart.

Mr Hallward remained with him six months, to help and encourage him both by preaching and conversation, and was welcomed by him so affectionately and emphatically, that the people were filled with joy and gratitude to God, who had wrought such a change. Mr Cadogan also wrote to Lady Huntingdon, avowing his conversion, and expressing his veneration for her character and usefulness, and received in reply, from the venerable old saint, then in her 74th year, a long and characteristic letter. He associated himself with Mr Romaine, Mr Newton, and Mr Hill, who were his frequent visitors, and occasionally occupied his pulpit.

His church was soon crowded, his ministry was one of the most useful of his day, and his congregation came to regard him with a kind of worship. His career, however, was prematurely closed. After a ministry of twenty-two years, he died, somewhat suddenly, on the 1st of January 1797, in the forty-sixth of his age.

Then the difficulties and divisions that had occurred on Mr Talbot's death were repeated. A godly man of the evangelical school was at first offered the vicarage, but he declined it on the ground that he could never hope suffi-

ciently to fill the pulpit, which for so many years had been occupied by so great a man as Mr Cadogan.

The vicarage was then presented to the Rev. Joseph Eyre, who seems to have preached "another gospel which was not another," and who was suspected by the congregation of "being more a Socinian than anything else." At a visitation of the Bishop of Salisbury, held at Reading in the following year, Mr Eyre assailed Mr Cadogan and the evangelists in a sermon on "The Probable Causes and Consequences of Enthusiasm."

After having in vain entreated permission to appoint a lecturer, whose salary they undertook to provide, a great part of the congregation felt themselves compelled reluctantly to secede from the Established Church, and to erect a chapel for themselves. So that there were then, as there are now, causes of schism within the Establishment, as well as without it.

On the 14th of January 1798, just twelve months after Mr Cadogan's death, a temporary chapel was opened for the use of the seceders—the Rev. Rowland Hill preaching morning and evening, and the Rev. John Eyre of Hackney in the afternoon.

On the 16th of December in the same year, a new chapel, erected by the voluntary subscriptions of the congregation, was opened in Castle Street, seating upwards of a thousand persons. The Rev. John Eyre preached in the morning, the Rev. Wm. Green, the minister whom they had chosen—one of Lady Huntingdon's Trevecca students—in the afternoon, and the Rev. Rowland Hill in the evening. Mr Green did not remain long at Reading; and in January 1805, the Rev. Henry Gauntlett, curate of Botley, near Southampton, became their pastor. "I am informed by Mrs Rowland

Hill," says Sir Richard Hill, in a letter to him, "that she thinks a minister is wanted at Reading, in Berkshire, for a large chapel there, instituted exactly upon the same plan as that of my brother's; and if the minister chooses to take a few pupils, there is no doubt but he might have some there. The congregation consists of the late Mr Cadogan's hearers, and they are for the most part zealous for the Church; and therefore, if they cannot hear the gospel in it, are resolved to keep as near to it as they can." *

Mr Gauntlett did not remain with them more than two years. Then, in 1808, a separation took place, and the separatists took an old Presbyterian chapel in Minister Street. Castle Street seems to have been supplied by various ministers until 1821, when Mr Sherman accepted the pastorate.

On the 16th of November 1823, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the chapel was celebrated, and was the occasion of great excitement in Reading. Mr Sherman preached in the afternoon, and Rowland Hill morning and evening. The desire to hear Mr Hill was very great. The doors were beset long before the hours of service, and hundreds went away unable to obtain admission into the crowded edifice; and many who went to gratify mere curiosity found the Saviour whom His venerable servant so faithfully and urgently preached.

The history of this church is interesting and instructive. It shews that the evils that are sometimes adduced as the characteristics of a peculiar church-system are to be found in all church-systems. They have their root in the common

* Gauntlett's Memoirs, p. 48.

infirmities of our nature, and only their special form of development in circumstances. Differences and schisms are the exclusive reproach of no Church on the face of the earth. If, in free Nonconforming Churches, they spring from one cause, in Established Churches they spring from another. The differences in the Church of England, and even in the Church of Rome, are as numerous, as radical, and as notorious as in any Nonconforming body; we can scarcely hesitate to say more so. Perhaps no Nonconforming body has ever resolved itself into so many distinct, and mutually exclusive, and intolerant parties as at the present moment exist within the Establishment. Neither Congregationalists nor Baptists, Presbyterians nor Wesleyans, have ever exhibited contrasts and antipathies so radical and bitter as those between the Tractarians and the Evangelicals, the Rationalists—as represented by Mr Maurice, Dr Colenso, and the authors of "Essays and Reviews"—and both. It is surely a very shallow philosophy that can feel it to be a mitigation of these evils, that an external cloak of conformity is thrown over them—that an external bond of ritual and subscription prevents open schism; for what is this but the maintenance of a huge unreality—the sacrifice of moral consistency at the shrine of organisation, wealth, and power? Surely the open separations of Nonconformity, when differences occur, are infinitely better, more honest, more healthful in every way, than such thinly-veiled shams, and such dubiously-reiterated confessions of uniformity. Open divisions may scandalise one class of feelings; but simulated agreements scandalise another. The former touch only proprieties; the latter violate moralities.

The Reading congregation illustrate one of the processes by which thousands of English Christians have reluctantly been made Dissenters. They were sincerely attached to the Episcopal Church, and would fain have put their new place of worship under episcopal jurisdiction. They did not wish to be thought Dissenters, and they continued to use the Liturgy of the Established Church; they even provided that the ordinance of baptism was never to be administered in the chapel. As in most such cases, they remained for a long time theoretic Churchmen, while practically they were Dissenters. Their practice, however, necessarily involved a corresponding theory as its sequence; and in a generation or two they became Nonconformists on conviction and principle. The building, however, was not amenable to the same laws of change. Under the influence of their first feeling, their trust-deed had been so constructed as, under given circumstances, to provide for their return to the Establishment. Hence, at the close of Mr Sherman's pastorate, the two feelings came into collision. Some few of the trustees wished to transfer the building to the Church of England, but the congregation generally, having become Nonconformists, were not willing to be so transferred. The result was, that the building went one way and the congregation another; for the latter erected for themselves the large and handsome Congregational chapel in Castle Street, of which the Rev. Spedding Curwen was the first pastor. But although the building thus reverted to the Established Church, it could not be consecrated; for a clause had been inserted in its trust-deed, providing that, should it ever be necessary to sell the building, the proceeds should be devoted to the

London Missionary Society. It remains, therefore, to this day, only a licensed chapel; the London Missionary Society retaining this reversionary interest in it.

How invariably do restriction and intolerance produce the very issues they are meant to interdict! Half the Dissent of Christendom has been produced by tyrannous or sordid Churchism.

CHAPTER II.

"THE settlement of a young minister in a large and important sphere of labour is necessarily anticipated with much anxiety. The more influential the congregation, the greater will be the alternations of his fear and hope. It was especially so in my case. Although I had been favoured with much acceptance in the churches, yet preaching to a congregation for a few weeks or months is far easier than are the labours and responsibilities of a regular pastoral charge. Yet this previous training was very valuable to me. I had been three years and a-half preaching to various congregations in the kingdom, and had learnt something of human nature, of church-government, of the excellences of Christians of various denominations, of the power of religious experience in restraining sin and in actuating effort, and of the glorious might of the gospel in rescuing souls from the snares of Satan. And I now see the hand of God in thus giving me practical knowledge adapted to the requirements of my new charge. After all, my knowledge was limited enough.

I had not had the educational advantages which many of my brethren possess, and by which they are qualified for their work. This previous discipline, therefore, was especially valuable to me.

"I started from Bristol on horseback, sleeping the first night at Bath, and taking leave of my friends there. The second day, when approaching Hungerford, I was overtaken by a great storm of thunder and rain, and took refuge in the inn, near the bridge. After I had had some dinner, the storm seemed over, and I resumed my journey; but, when about to cross the bridge, a flash of lightning seemed to strike the horse, and he fell. I got him upon his feet again, and back to the stable; but he trembled so that he was scarcely able to walk, and, after a few weeks, he died. He had been a great pet, and had afforded me many a refreshing ride over Durdam and Clifton Downs. He had, moreover, been the gift of a dear friend; so that I greatly regretted his loss. I took up my temporary residence at the house of General B——, to whom I had been commended by some friends at Clifton. His urbanity and kindness were an enouraging commencement of my intercourse with the people.

"My first interview with the elders of the church at Reading was at a dinner given for the purpose by Mr French. I thought that I had never in one company seen so many fine heads:—Mr Tanner, a brewer, with his carefully-powdered hair and his queue,—Dr Ring, a physician, who had the leading practice in the town, remarkably handsome in countenance and elegant in manners, a most animated speaker and conversationalist,—Mr Stratton, who had been a bookseller in London, with a complexion fair as a lily although

he was seventy, powdered and trim, with a head that would have made a fine subject for the crayons of Russell,—Mr French, a refined and well-informed man, with a singularly-benevolent countenance, and one of the most heavenly-minded men with whom I ever came in contact,—Mr Compigne, an attorney, precise and elegant in all his belongings, with sharp features and a well-shaped head,—Mr Baylis, the clerk of St Giles's Church for the last thirty years, gentlemanly in his manners, and a superior man in intelligence and piety,—Mr Billing, a younger man, a builder; and some others.

"With one or two exceptions, these were all the fruits of Mr Cadogan's ministry, and were men of peculiar godliness. The entire congregation had seceded from the Establishment, when the living which Mr Cadogan had held was given to a successor, whose first efforts were to prove that his doctrine was erroneous and licentious. They erected a chapel in the centre of the town, on the site of the old jail, and after the model of Camden Chapel, Camberwell. They retained the liturgical services of the Church, and notwithstanding many appeals for an abbreviation, they insisted upon the use of the whole. The chapel was opened in 1798 by Mr Eyre and Rowland Hill, and for twenty-three years its affairs were conducted in perfect harmony and with great efficiency. Until I became its first settled minister, it had been supplied by some of the most eminent ministers of all denominations, who had attracted large and influential congregations. The length of the lives of these excellent managers was remarkable. They had outlived three corporations of the town, and it became a proverb that if you wanted a good lease of your

life, you must become a member of the committee of Castle Street Chapel.

"The kindness of those good men greatly cheered and encouraged my spirit. The day after this dinner, Dr Ring met me, and after some encouraging words said: 'My young friend, I was very glad to see you could let the bottle pass after two glasses,'—a remark that I have often thought of since. At that time wine-drinking at dinners was a common habit, without which it was supposed good cheer could not be maintained. In my case there was no merit, for I never could take much more without suffering; but the remark shewed me that even at the feasts of friends there are watchful eyes upon the minister, jealous of his reputation; and that impressions may be made which will either help or injure his ministrations.

"Although my preaching was probationary, the pastorate was considered as virtually a settled thing. Testimonials of acceptance came in the form of crowded congregations, and some hopeful proofs of conversion to God. One occasion may be mentioned which made too deep an impression to be forgotten. The great Reading Cheese Fair was held during my six weeks' probation. I announced a sermon in connexion with it. Long before the doors were opened, the crowd stretched across the road, and as soon as an entrance could be obtained, a general rush took place. I addressed the congregation from Rom. vi. 21, 'What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.' After shewing the perversion of fairs from their original purpose, and the evils which they produced, I applied the text personally to the sins which

many then present were probably committing at the fair. Greatly moved myself, a divine influence accompanied my emotion, and moved them. It was a scene never to be forgotten—a great part of the congregation was bathed in tears, while the stillness of suppressed feelings pervaded the entire assembly. I preached for an hour and a half, and the impression grew, until, exhausted by my own emotions, I was compelled to conclude. As the congregation was composed of persons who had come to the fair from all parts of England, I seldom took a journey from home without meeting with some one who attributed either his first impressions or his religious decision to that service. No other service during my probationary term was equal in power to this; yet God gave me favour in the sight of the people, and I left with a universal entreaty for my return. Oh, I bless my God for so helping me in my early ministrations, and for making me taste and know that He is good and worthy to be trusted!

"I agreed to settle amongst the people in the April following; and employed the intervening time in preaching at Bristol and Bath. At both places large congregations attended; and if the testimony of many wanderers may be received, they were turned from 'darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.'

"During my residence at Bristol I had a new and unexpected trouble. I had been accepted by Miss Grant as a suitor, and for some time our intercourse continued with mutual affection and confidence; but Dr Grant, her father, had recently paid a visit to his relatives in the country, who looked upon the intended union as so far beneath his daughter's reasonable prospects, that he expressed to her

his decided wish that it might be abandoned. This, of course, was communicated to me. I told her that I did not wish her to do anything hastily, and that she had better take three or four weeks to think and pray over it; and if at the end of that time she considered it still her duty to break off the connexion, I would submit, although with a heavy heart. I left for Bath, but my duties were heavily performed; and though the congregations were large, the people equally kind, and the success great, my personal comfort in my work was greatly lessened. At the end of the month I went to ask her decision. She thought that obedience to her father was her imperative duty; and with this I left her, relieved of suspense, but with an aching heart, for I loved her intensely, and notwithstanding her decision, I could not doubt that my affection was reciprocated. She was a tall, handsome person, well educated, of a sound judgment, and deeply pious; but she had not long been converted to God, so that her knowledge of divine things was not so extensive as that of those who have the privilege of early religious training. Her loss to me, therefore, may easily be imagined.

CHAPTER III.

"In the month of April 1821, I started from Bath for my new sphere of labour, and was heartily welcomed by the elders of the church. As the parsonage was occupied, I took the drawing-room in the house of the clerk. Both he and his wife were intelligent and pious people, and I derived great benefit from my intercourse with them.

"Besides my ordinary hours of devotion, I devoted a short time every day, at eleven o'clock, for special prayer for myself as a minister, and for her whose society and help I had lost. Oh the precious fellowship with God I there had! It was like talking to a friend. He favoured me with such gracious views of His love, character, and willingness to bless me in my loneliness, that I felt, that, whatever might be the result of my still-cherished hopes, I could leave all in His faithful hands. Disappointed affection, fixed upon an earthly friend, may be modified and sanctified by Divine communion; but its tumultuous risings will occasionally find vent, and sometimes they gushed forth beyond my control. Yet this trial, and the communion with God to which it led, greatly prepared me for my pastoral duties. It kept me humble and dependent, and gave me sympathy with the sorrows of others. Such disappointments may afford merriment to lookers-on; but no sorrow is more acute, and renders the poor disconsolate soul more unfit for the active duties of life. On my sanguine temperament it produced a great effect. It made me grave and serious both in public and private, greatly to the advantage of my character and ministry.

"I commenced my pastorate on Sunday, April 15, 1821, taking as a text, Deut. xxxiii. 25, 'As thy days, so shall thy strength be.' To me it was a prophecy and a promise. Days of trial, struggle, joy, prayer, labour, I knew I must have; but strength to urge on my way, my Lord and Master would bestow. Sixteen years afterwards, when I was about to leave Reading for London, Dr King took my hand, and said:—'Well, I bear testimony that God has fulfilled the

promise with which you began your ministry; and go where you will, my dear friend, you will have His strength. If you preach as you have done amongst us, you need not tell the people where your strength came from. I am an old man, you in the vigour of your manhood; but you can do no more than I, except Christ strengthen you.' Though there was nothing new in the sentiment, there was something valuable in the testimony; and it is both inspiring and helpful when the people as well as yourself can see and trace God's hand in your ministry. Every sitting in the spacious chapel, said to hold 1200 persons, was soon let; and for years, the aisles were filled at almost every service. This surprised no one more than myself. The ministry was neither original, nor learned, nor intellectual, nor mythical, nor comical. Its doctrines were those usually styled moderate Calvinism. Its style was plain and pointed, and the savour of the gospel was in every sermon. But the truth was delivered with earnestness and practical application. God was my helper, and often surprised me by the impressions produced. I determined to write my sermons, except those for the Thursday evenings, for which I prepared a full skeleton; not to use notes in the pulpit; to speak as much as possible from my teeth; and to acquaint myself with the works of the best Nonconforming divines, especially such as Flavel, Gurnal, Sibbes, Howe, together with the works of such Episcopal divines as Leighton, Hall, and Taylor. For the first seven years I committed my sermons to memory; but the labour of this was so great, and my memory was so faithless, that, after the greatest labour, I was often but little better for my preparation. After that time, I took notes into the

pulpit, and learned to read without being much restrained by it; and it was a wonderful relief. In preaching I made many mistakes: sometimes of loudness for zeal; at others, of long introductions to my sermons, so that the porch was sometimes a third of the size of the whole house; and, especially, of sermons much too long both for myself and for my congregations. My strength, too, was not sufficiently reserved for the application, which, after a good foundation of doctrine has been laid, I have generally found to be the most effective part of a discourse, and should, therefore, have the greatest pains bestowed upon it. I tried to use illustrations and similitudes taken from the Bible and from common life, with which the people were familiar. Sometimes I succeeded, and saw the eyes sparkle and the mouth open, and heard of the effect afterwards. They were 'goads fastened by the Master of assemblies.' A course of visitation was necessary to acquaint me with the religious state and habits of the people, which I immediately commenced. And, by private conversations, I obtained many hints and helps for my Sabbath sermons. The schools were well carried on by efficient teachers; but, there being no school-room, the children were taught in the chapel, which was a great inconvenience to both teachers and scholars. As wise and considerate persons, they did not require more from the minister than his patronage, and an occasional visit—which I cheerfully gave. Thus, I began my pastorate with a harmonious flock; a band of men, as elders, of good social station, and of intelligence; a sufficient number of excellent teachers; and a large congregation, satisfied with my preaching.

"I made a great mistake in determining to preach a course of sermons on the Psalms on Thursday evenings. Had I taken the parables, or the Gospels, or various portions of the Divine Word, it would have afforded me more scope and variety. The Psalms confined me too much to devotional subjects and religious experience, which, though pleasant, should be only sparingly introduced. The incidents, doctrines, and maxims of the New Testament are, after all, the staple of the ministry, from which both experience and practice are to be deduced. If the Psalms had been treated more skilfully, as Dr Manton would have treated them, they would, doubtless, have been more acceptable and useful. I did not, however, after pledging myself, like to abandon so rich a mine of experimental godliness, so long as I heard no complaints, and there were large congregations willing to listen.

"After about six months, I went for a special service to Bristol, and remained at Clifton for my vacation. Here the troubled waters of separation were healed. The Doctor, seeing that his daughter's health was suffering, gave his consent, and we were married at St Nicholas' Church, Bristol, on the 10th of January 1822. It was a very quiet, Christian wedding, at which the Saviour condescended to be present. We married full of hope that our future life might prove one of increased usefulness, and our friends were full of good wishes and prayers. We spent the chief part of our honeymoon in London, where I supplied the pulpit of Spafields Chapel for a month; and a glorious season it was. My old preparations were sufficient for all the requirements of the Sabbath; and during the week my time was at my disposal for visiting

my friends with my new wife, who charmed all by her unassuming manners, and her devotedness to the Saviour. God gave great testimony to the word of His grace, so that during the latter part of my stay, my time was employed in seeing and conversing with many who were under religious impressions; and, refreshed and comforted, I returned to my charge, with new vows to devote myself more fully to my God and Saviour.

"It would be too tedious to enter into details of the methods, successes, and distresses of my ministry during my residence at Reading. A few particulars may give the general outline. For some years we breakfasted at seven o'clock; I entered my study at eight, and spent the time until nine in prayer and devotional reading. Three days in each week, for two hours each day, I pursued my studies with the aid of a private tutor, who read with me Greek and Mental Philosophy. My tutor was an Oxford M.A.; as dull and heavy a preacher as could well be imagined, but a good expositor in a drawing-room, and full of all kinds of information. He was a very honourable man; never letting it be known for what purpose he so often visited me, lest it should injure me in the opinion of my congregation. At the end of two years, owing to my multiplied engagements, I was reluctantly compelled to relinquish his services, and the regret at our separation was mutual: but, short as this period of study was, it increased my knowledge, and, I believe, materially assisted me in my labours; while he thought that my flow of good spirits had put a little life into him.

"The birth of my first-born, a daughter, occasioned me great joy. I loved children naturally, but one of my own

to love produced a feeling of intensity to which previously I had been a stranger. As soon as she was dressed, I took her from the nurse into my study, and offered her to the Lord, praying that He would accept her for His service, and that, whatever her lot in life might be, He would make her, and keep her, His own child. She lives to prove that that prayer is answered, and to be my joy, in seeing her 'walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.' Rowland Hill wrote me a characteristic letter on her birth, and afterwards cut out with his own hand the figures and letters from which she learnt her alphabet.

"The labour of writing and committing to memory my sermons injured my health. The fact was, that I began my preparations too late in the week, so that on the Sunday morning I was exhausted before I began to preach. I partook of the feeling of many who think that they can never do anything except under great pressure. I have, however lived to learn that this is a most injurious error, both for the preacher and for his congregation. With determination and perseverance, a man may begin on the Monday as well as on the Saturday. One hour each day must be less exhausting than six hours in one day; the mind fresher for thought, and the imagination more fertile. I was astonished at the greater freshness of the discourses that were so written after the outline was completed; and at the personal vigour and comfort retained by the nervous system.

"Before I made this discovery, and after three years of painful labour, I fell into a state of nervous debility. The undue excitement of the brain affected the whole system, and brought on constipation and loss of muscular energy. I

suffered also from relaxed throat, so that entire abstinence from all pulpit exercises became necessary, and I was ordered to Clifton for rest. As I had now two children, and had but little prospect of resuming labour for a long time, this was a great trial. The prosperous state of the church and congregation was the rejoicing of my heart. But I had to be taught a lesson of dependence, and that God could carry on His cause without me,—a truth I was in the habit of uttering, but oh, how different the feeling when you are made to feel that God *will* do without you! In other ways this separation from Reading was a benefit to me. I made the acquaintance of Robert Hall, who gave me free access to his house and society. Kind, generous, and noble-minded I always found him; and when I could draw him out, his conversation was most brilliant and glowing, and richly instructive. Frequently, I had some theological difficulty for him to solve, or some experimental matter to speak about. Although on the former he would give clear and conclusive explanations, yet on the latter he shone the most, and seemed most thoroughly to enjoy a manly expression of heartfelt religion. His ministry was very profitable; keeping alive in my poor heart a vivid sense of my heavenly Father's love. I heard Mr Hall preach the sermons, the skeletons of which were afterwards published in the *Christian Observer* by Daniel Wilson, Bishop of Calcutta; I witnessed also Mr Wilson's enjoyment of them, as well as heard him state to Hannah More, and to large parties at Clifton, their substance, and his estimate of their value.

"By the mercy of my God, I was able, after a few months, to return to my loving charge. I now turned my special attention to a more ample provision for preaching the gos-

pel in the villages round Reading. For some time, some gifted laymen had attempted to sow the seeds of the gospel in them, some of which had sprung up and borne fruit; but their meetings were mostly held in the kitchens of farmers, and other friends willing to brave the odium attached to such services. Only a few persons could be but very inconveniently accommodated. Little churches adapted to the various localities were required. My first effort was Woodley, a little village four miles from Reading. I commenced by praying for direction and for means, and God gave both: to my utter astonishment, a friend promised me fifty pounds, and sufficient came in from different quarters to justify my perseverance. A very pretty little church, holding about two hundred persons, built of Bath stone, with small tower and steeple, was erected for little more than £300, and stands now as a monument of love and liberality, principally from Churchmen. Just before its erection, a spirit of hearing greatly prevailed. The villagers might be seen going to the cottage where the service was held, each with a stool or chair on his shoulder, and the room was crowded to excess. Formerly almost every labourer in that village was a poacher: the effect of the preaching of the gospel was, that poaching was so generally abandoned that, as a testimony to the value of the labours of the young man who usually preached to them and visited them in their dwellings, the squire sent him annually a present of game. What a pleasing testimony this to the virtue of the gospel, which influenced them to honesty more than all the imprisonment to which most of them had been subject!

"During my visits to Surrey Chapel and to Brighton, I

became acquainted with an aged lady, a friend of Mr Hill's, who owned several farms in the neighbourhood of Caversham. In the more distant part of the village, near Emmer Green, she was anxious that a chapel should be built on her own land. The farmer who rented the land was a member of our church, and he willingly gave up a portion of the land without requiring any diminution of rent. One morning she said to me, 'I should like to build a house for God, if you will undertake it.' Nothing loath, I soon obtained plans, and, in the course of nine months, a neat structure of Bath stone, with a tower and a bell, was erected, and the congregation, formerly worshipping in the farmer's kitchen, was transferred to this more convenient sanctuary. To that building has since been added a schoolroom for daily and Sabbath tuition, and a parsonage-house. The good lady left the sum of £1500 as an endowment, the interest of which aids the minister to labour amongst a poor, but willing people. I believe that both in the chapel and in the schools much good has been accomplished; a church has been formed, and additions to it from souls converted by the word of God were annually made.

"Theale is a village on the Bath Road about five miles from Reading. Its inhabitants had been long notorious for their wickedness, and had obtained for it the *sobriquet* of Little Sodom. One minister had been hooted and pelted out of the place for attempting to teach its inhabitants the way of salvation. For some time, not even a temporary room could be obtained. At last, a butcher who came to Reading on the Sabbath was brought under the influence of the gospel; and, happily for him and for us, he married a

very godly young woman, of great faith in Christ, and great decision of character. Their kitchen was immediately given for a Sabbath service, and, to our astonishment, was soon well filled with an attentive audience. A poor woman above seventy years of age was the first convert to Christ in that little assembly, who gave remarkable evidence of the work of the Spirit of God on her soul, for she became an earnest, spiritual, laborious worker for the Saviour. She was joined by a few others, who, though much younger, partook of her spirit. I have observed that the first convert in a new sphere generally gives a tone to those who come after. To a great degree they will partake of the spirituality or carnality which the first exhibits. The little band increased till the place became far too strait. Land could not be obtained, as it was in the possession of those who could not tolerate Dissent in any form. Although the gospel was not preached in the Established Church, souls might perish rather than Dissenters should preach it. The butcher, however, offered a part of his garden; and a small but commodious chapel, with schoolroom attached, was erected. It was not so picturesque as the two former, as the site did not permit it, and it was partly concealed by the house; but it was very neat and commodious. From the time of its opening, with various changes, it has maintained the gospel among the villagers, and many of them bless God for the day when they or their children first learned the way to heaven from its humble labourers.

"Binfield Heath is a village distant from Reading about three miles, in a purely agricultural district, having a scattered population, which no man seemed to care for. Very

few efforts to introduce the gospel amongst the people had been made, and the distance of the village from Henley, Reading, &c., was too great for the villagers to visit those towns on the Sabbath. I determined to attempt something. Ecclesiastical influences interposed to prevent rooms being employed for regular religious services; but fortunately a piece of freehold land, in an eligible situation, where two or three roads met, was offered for sale, and I immediately purchased it. A committee of active, intelligent men undertook to superintend the erection of a house of prayer, if I would obtain the money. I made known our wants, and the money came in most liberally and unexpectedly. A very pretty church, with tower and bell, affording accommodation for 250 persons, with a schoolroom attached, was in the course of twelve months erected. It was beautiful in the landscape, but far more beautiful as a place where men were transformed into living temples for the living God. There, amid much opposition, devout men have grown gray in the service of the villagers, and the Lord has not suffered them to labour in vain.

"One instance may be mentioned. One Monday morning, Mrs M——, an intelligent woman, the wife of a cottager, called at my house in Reading, her countenance beaming with joy. 'What has happened, Mrs M——?' 'Oh, sir, I have reason to be happy. You know my husband was a very wicked man; but such a change has come over him lately. Formerly, he would curse me and the children; now he reads a chapter in the evening, and we have family prayer daily: once the children would hide themselves when they heard his footsteps; now they run to the gate to meet him and to receive

his kiss. On a Sunday it is not like the same cottage. The former part of the day used to be spent in the public-house; and when he came home, he was more like a beast than a man. Now, after going to our little church, where the gospel first touched his heart, as soon as we have had our dinner, he will take one little one upon his knee, and say, "Now, Katie, repeat the hymn that I gave you;" and stroking the head of the oldest, he will say, "Come, William, let us hear whether you can say your chapter perfectly;" and then in the evening he prays and reads to us. I seem to have a new husband, a new cottage, and a new family; all things are become new. Six months ago I was confined of this baby. On former confinements, he has cursed me and the children; but when he returned home in the evening, and found what had happened, he took the Bible and said, "We must not forget to thank God for His mercies." He read the 116th Psalm, prayed beautifully for me, the babe, and all the children, and then kissed me affectionately. I could not, sir, help embracing him, and, with many tears of joy, exclaiming, "O William, my precious husband, how much the gospel has done for you!"'

"After listening to her simple story, I could not help exclaiming, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,' and congratulating her upon her cause for joy.

"There was yet another village—Wargrave—on which my heart was set. 'Beautiful for situation,' it stood by the banks of the Thames, and had been long renowned for the residence in it of celebrated men. It had the sad characteristic of determined hostility to the gospel. Good Mr Bolton.

the son-in-law of Mr Jay, the Independent minister at Henley, had made many efforts to introduce the gospel among the poor of Wargrave; and when foiled, as again and again he was, he returned to the work, until at length the whole village rose against him, drowning his voice by noises, and endangering his life by missiles of every description. He felt it his duty to relinquish the attempt. Every cottage was afraid to allow the use of a room, and no one would sell us a piece of land for the erection of a sanctuary. Lord Bolingbroke had resided there, and, by the dissemination of infidel principles, private theatricals, &c., had poisoned the minds of the poor against religion; and this descended to their children. A respectable family, independent in circumstances, and religiously disposed, settled in the village, and opened a large room for divine worship. Two of our own people, who had opened a shop in the village, although at a serious loss of custom, threw their judicious energies into the movement. Many of the villagers attended; some became impressed, and open hostility ceased. But after two or three years, the family at whose house the preaching was carried on left, and another and more suitable place was much required. Just at this time a piece of land came into the market, the history of which was very singular. Its owner had bequeathed it to relatives, on the condition that they should erect upon it no place of worship nor a school; if they did, it was to revert to other parties. A curse seemed to rest upon it, and all who came into the possession of it were reduced even to abject poverty. It was, therefore, to be sold by auction. We bought it, and built on it a plain but beautiful little church, with a vestry and schoolroom,—

an ornament to the village. It was opened for public worship the year before I left Reading.

"In order to liquidate the cost of this, the ladies of the congregation originated a bazaar, which they calculated would produce about £50. It was held in a tent pitched in a field on the outside of Reading. But although all outward opposition had ceased, emissaries were employed to dissuade persons of influence and property from attending it. I preached on the Sunday, and told the people that, as such efforts to defeat their object had been made, every man, woman, and child must attend and purchase. The very attempt to prevent success excited the utmost enthusiasm, and after two days of hard work, nearly £300 were realised. I have witnessed many similar sales, and I know the objections taken to them; but the most fastidious could scarcely have found fault with the admirable arrangement and Christian conduct of this.

"There were two other village chapels usually supplied from my congregation—Sonning and Pound Green; but these were erected before my residence in Reading.

"Before I left for London, I had the gratification of clearing all the seven from debt, and of leaving them in substantial repair; and, subject to many changes and dispensations, and with alternate successes and depressions, they have ever since been centres of light and gracious influence, where many have been taught the way to heaven, and where hundreds of children have sung their 'Hosannas' to Jesus. They have helped to make minds peaceful and homes happy, and to spread the principles of truth and duty. Had I lived in Reading for no other purpose, it would have been worth

all the labour, disappointment, vexation, prayer, and sacrifices bestowed and endured, to know that, for generations to come, these little sanctuaries shall contribute to the number of the saved, and to the diminution of the sins and miseries of our fallen humanity. Of course, these additional churches increased my anxieties and duties. With feeble health, I found it impossible to give more than general superintendence, and occasional service in the week; besides always taking one of the anniversary sermons. Yet the pastoral work did not seem to suffer in the general result; for sometimes a divine influence fell upon the word which astonished both minister and people. Some of those 'times of refreshing' can never be forgotten. One Whitsunday morning, I was preaching from Isa. xliv. 3–5, 'For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.' And, as if to illustrate it, the Spirit of the Lord came like a flood over the parched souls of the congregation, and all became sensible that there was something more than human argument convincing the judgment. A secret, irresistible influence subdued the wills of many undecided souls. The congregation was melted to tears; and every one felt as if he wished to be alone with God. One poor backslider, on whom my hopes had long rested, unable to restrain himself, when I cried out, 'Who will "subscribe with his hand to the Lord" to-day?

who will "surname himself by the name of Israel" now?' cried out, 'I will.' The congregation caught the infection, and hands seemed involuntarily stretched out as if ready to sign their names. I thought it best to conclude at that moment, inviting all who felt disposed to commemorate the love and work of the Lord Jesus, which had procured the gift of the Holy Spirit, to come and seal their vows at the table of the Lord; and entreating such of the congregation as did not partake of the Lord's Supper to stop and witness its celebration. It was the most difficult service I ever conducted. A large number who had never partaken of the bread and the cup before came tremblingly to the table: weeping mothers bringing their stalwart sons; and fathers, who seldom knew what it was to weep, overcome to see their daughters there; children in like manner affected by seeing parents—and, in one instance, a grandfather—drawing near, with the publican's prayer upon their lips. I attempted to address them from the table; but the occasion seemed one on which words were little required; and I found it best to dismiss them, and entreat any who felt anxious for heaven, and willing to converse with me, to see me the next day, or before the next Sunday. It pleased God to move eighty-one souls, most of them young, to devote themselves to His Church and service that day. I confess that, concerning some of them, I stood in doubt: they had so little to say for themselves, and on many points seemed so ignorant, and had such confused notions of the atonement, that I hesitated to enroll them as members of the church; but there seemed so much sincerity in their motives that I could not refuse them. I hoped that Christian instruction in the Bible-class,

and from the pulpit, would increase their intelligence, and secure their stability. And so it did. Although many of them knew and felt only the two grand essentials of experimental religion,—viz., that they were sinners, and that Christ died for such; that He had invited them to come to Him, and that they had accepted the invitation and become His servants; yet I was permitted to witness some taking a lead in the church, and others intelligently labouring for the salvation of their fellow-men. Certainly not more fell away than in an equal number of members slowly and ordinarily received.

"Cases of individual conversion, of deep and romantic interest, frequently occurred. A gentleman in the city, holding a high position, connected with the monetary transactions of the Government, visited Reading with his wife, to place his daughters in charge of some Christian ladies for their education. These ladies were the sisters of a clergyman; but, having received benefit from my ministry, they continued to attend it. The lady visitor agreed to accompany them to chapel; but the husband objected to go. Soon after they had gone, however, he thought that he would go and see what it was like. The service had begun when he arrived, and the aisles were so full that he could obtain only a standing, a little way within the door. Unaccustomed to anything like difficulty in obtaining a seat in his own church, or seeing any one unaccommodated, the very difficulty and inconvenience excited his interest. The Liturgy was read with propriety and feeling, and without abridgment, and the psalmody was so congregational and so hearty, that before the sermon began his prejudices were considerably dimin-

ished. The text was Ps. xxxvii. 16, 'A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.' He had gathered heaps of money, and supposed that happiness was augmented by accumulation. The sermon put his thoughts upon a new track. He learned many new lessons. He went home thoughtful, and questioning himself about the employment of his money for doing good to the souls of men. Supposing that he had been at church, and anxious to know if he had been gratified, his wife asked him the text. He replied by quoting it. 'Why, that was the text we had. Surely you have not been there?' 'I have, and do not wonder at your preference; and, if you will give me a seat, I will go with you in the evening.' Amazed and overjoyed with his interest in the truths that he had heard, she prayed for a blessing upon the evenings ervice. I forget the text; but I noticed the stranger and his wife sitting with my friends, and his anxious interest in the discourse. After the service they came into the vestry, and were introduced. With evident feeling, he thanked me for the services of the day, and expressed his hope that he should never forget them. On taking his leave, he said, 'I understand that you are going to London to-morrow. I must go by the early coach, but my carriage is going up with my wife; and if you will accept a seat, take charge of her, and make my house your home whenever you come to London, it will be a great gratification to me.' Many like invitations from the rich and dignified are given; but with such evident hollowness, that any independent mind would treat them with the indifference that they deserve. This, however, carried with it so much heart, that I readily accepted it. And from that

day until his death, several years afterwards, I made his suburban house my London home, witnessed the fruits of piety in my friend and his family, and found it a 'Bethel' for Christian devotion and intercourse. On what little pivots do the happiness and salvation of individuals often turn!

"Though I have never suffered much from rude and scornful hearers, yet a few instances in my ministry have occurred. It is difficult at the moment to decide on the proper course to be taken with such offenders. Generally, I have found an immediate appeal to them effectual in reducing them to order. One Thursday evening, a farmer's son, of some wealth, and of considerable importance in his own estimation, entered the chapel. I had nearly concluded the Liturgy when I observed him very irreverent. On my return from the vestry, after changing the surplice, I observed him employed in cracking nuts, with his feet upon the cushion. After a brief prayer, and the announcement of the text, I made a few remarks upon the sanctity of God's house, and the reverence which His presence should inspire in all worshippers. Heedless of these remarks, his conduct became insufferable. I paused, and, contrary to my custom, looked him full in the face, and said, 'A gentleman who did not behave himself in the society of gentlemen in a drawing-room would run the risk of being expelled or shunned. What shall we say should be the conduct of a Christian assembly to a man who dishonoured their God and desecrated His sanctuary?' He hung down his head with shame, and, during the remainder of the service, behaved with the utmost decorum. On the following Sabbath morning I saw him occupying a seat, and paying devout attention to the word. To my astonishment,

this continued for several Sabbaths; and I then received a visit from him, when he acknowledged his great offence against God, and stated that the reproof administered to him had, he believed, been the means of the salvation of his soul. He became a devoted member of the church, taught in the school, and was liberal and active in doing good. However it may be received at the time, faithfulness to God will win its way to a thoughtful heart; and under the roughest aspects of human nature, there are some quite as susceptible as the most refined.

"Towards the conclusion of my ministry at Reading, death made several inroads into our family. Both my parents entered into rest within a few years of each other; but, as is not unfrequently the case, the stronger was taken first. By devoted lives, and triumphant deaths, both left a precious testimony to the love of Christ, and to the virtue of His atonement. My first feeling when I saw my honoured father in his coffin was, 'I have lost his prayers:'—a great loss; for who sympathises like a pious father?—who is so anxious for the reputation and success of his son, especially when that is an only son? I could find consolation only in the testimony of the apostle, 'It is witnessed that *He* liveth.' And His intercession never changes, never fails.

"The next relative on whom death laid his hand was my wife's father, Dr Grant. When he relinquished practice at Bristol, he and Mrs Grant came to reside in Reading. Apoplexy removed him by a sudden stroke, and we were left to mourn the loss of one who had contributed much to our happiness.

"But my chief trial was the loss of my precious wife.

After the birth of her son Westran, she complained of extreme weakness. Change of air and scene was sought; but her debility passed into confirmed diabetes. In few diseases has the patient more need of resolution and faith. It is a terrific disease, for which no remedy seems to have been discovered, and in very few instances has recovery been known. She lingered for two years, when a cold, from which she had not constitutional strength to rally, carried her off in a few days.

"A double affliction awaited me. After watching by her side for two nights, I left her room to get a little fresh air, and called upon a friend to inform her of the state of the invalid. She was hanging up a picture, which she did not like to entrust to the hands of a servant. I ascended the steps to hang it for her. The servant who had brought them had neglected to see that the rope by which they were steadied was right; and when I was nearly at the top, they gave way, and I fell heavily to the ground. A concussion at the knee-joint, which rendered my left leg wholly useless, was the result. I had to be carried home, and to my bedroom.

"My beloved wife had become insensible, in which state she continued until the next day, when she passed away, and angels carried her spirit to paradise, to begin a new year with her Saviour and His redeemed."

The following letter, which Mr Sherman addressed to the church at Reading, will shew his estimate of her and of his loss:—

"*January* 5, 1834.

"MY BELOVED FLOCK,—Your afflicted pastor has had repeated occasions to interest your sympathies and prayers; but now his heart is overwhelmed within him, with the recent stroke of his heavenly Father. The first Sabbath in the new year was anticipated by the dear departed as well as myself as a day when we should meet around Christ's board and hold fellowship with our incarnate Lord, and more solemnly than ever devote ourselves afresh to His entire service. But how different our circumstances! That precious saint is now drinking the new wine in her Father's kingdom, and basking in the sunshine of her Saviour's love; while I, the Lord's crippled prisoner, sit amazed at His wonderful dealings, and cry for the refreshment of His grace. But He who knew what was best for me—He who loves me and my children—He who gave Himself to death that I might live—has done it! I am, therefore, dumb—I open not my mouth. O ye whose affectionate hearts were never appealed to in vain, let me entreat you to pray for me and my motherless little ones, and my afflicted relations, that they may be supported and comforted, and that I may be sanctified for my responsible work and my Saviour's presence. And allow your bereaved pastor to entreat you, as from the chamber of suffering and the coffin of death, to make a special dedication of yourselves to Christ's service at His table this day. Oh, let your hearts be lifted up to Christ, that He may take entire and eternal possession of your souls, and that, by His life in you, you may never dread to die. Beloved, 'Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not

the Son of man cometh;' so shall you be the joy and crown of, my beloved flock, your devoted pastor,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

Extracts from a memoir of Mrs Sherman, written by her husband for the *Evangelical Register*, February 1834:—

"She had scarcely ever heard the gospel faithfully preached till her fourteenth year. But at this period it pleased God to bring the family to Bristol, where, under the powerful and searching ministry of the Rev. Mr Cowan, curate of St Thomas's Church, she became a new creature in Christ Jesus. With grateful recollection she often referred to those days of first love, when she used to meet her now bereaved and sorrowing brother in private, to pray for the preservation and sanctification of their own souls, and for the blessing of the covenant to be extended to every unconverted relative. Every vain amusement was instantly abandoned—every article of dress which she considered scripturally inconsistent with the shamefacedness and sobriety of women professing godliness, was cast aside—four times every Sabbath-day she devoutly attended public worship at St Thomas's Church, where, as early as seven o'clock in the morning, and during all the services, the church was crowded with souls eager to learn the way of life; indeed, it required no rigorous examination to discover that with her 'old things had passed away, and, behold, all things had become new.' Her piety partook of the character of her disposition. Naturally retiring and reserved, it was not so perceptible by its glowing colours as by its precious fragrance. More like the violet than any

other flower in the garden, it repaid every one who sought it. It was around her own hearth, in the domestic circle, where, as a wife, a mother, and a saint, the influence of her piety was most felt.

"Her close walk with God was very remarkable. Though afflicted with a disease which, from the intense mental anxiety and bodily weakness it occasioned, many would deem a sufficient justification for abstaining from frequent religious exercises; yet communion with God was her chief delight. During the last three years she had risen in the summer before five o'clock, and in the winter between five and six, to read her Bible, hold fellowship with God, and meditate on His love. In the evening, at half-past six, she retired till half-past seven, and when she returned to her family, they often, without a miracle, perceived with whom she had been conversing. Thus three hours of every day were spent in God's immediate service. How much do her family owe to these secret communings with God!

"She attended to the religious instruction of her dear children as a duty of the highest importance and most sacred obligation. Firmness in commanding, and love in watching over her offspring, appeared singularly and happily united in her conduct.

"Her economy in the management of her household affairs, which so happily preserved the medium between prodigality and meanness, and left something for Christ's cause and the poor, relieved her husband from a thousand earthly anxieties, and left his mind free for his responsible work. Her punctuality, love of order, and tenderness of conscience, were discoverable in all her movements. Endued with a large portion of

common sense,—a jewel of inestimable value in the wife of a minister of Christ,—her counsels partook of the wisdom of mature age, and seldom proved erroneous. She held the offices of Secretary to The Infant's Friend Society, and Visitor of the Christian Instruction Society, till, after many painful struggles, she was obliged to abandon both. But there was one society which, not many months before her death, she was instrumental in forming, that gave her unfeigned pleasure, and in whose prosperity she felt the most lively interest,—The Maternal Society, an association of mothers, who meet to pray for their children, and to circulate information on the best methods of training them up for God. On the Friday preceding her departure, she took her usual ride, and returned refreshed, but complained of sore throat. This, however, subsided by medical aid, and on Monday she appeared nearly as well as usual. On Tuesday afternoon alarming symptoms appeared. She was asked by her husband, 'What is the state of your mind, my dear, under these sufferings? I trust you are supported and comforted?' She replied, 'If it is the will of God, I could wish to be spared a little longer, to enjoy the full assurance of my interest in Christ; but if I die, I die as a poor sinner clinging to the cross, and trusting in the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.' She speedily became insensible, and after about twenty-two hours fell asleep in Jesus, in the thirty-second year of her age, on the 1st of January 1834."

CHAPTER IV.

"LEFT now with three children, the eldest of whom was not more than eleven years of age, and the youngest only five, my duties became very oppressive. For more than six months I was necessitated to use crutches, to sit in the pulpit to preach, and to meet the claims of my congregation with a broken spirit. The rest from extra labour, however, improved my health; and, in the October following, I spent my vacation in supplying Surrey Chapel. During the six weeks that I was there 'showers of blessing' fell upon the crowds which thronged the edifice. And on one occasion, when I preached from Ps. cxix. 8, 'I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly,' many souls were won for Christ, as I have learned from the testimony of many since that glorious night.

"On this visit to the metropolis, I renewed an acquaintance, which I had formed some time before, with the family of Mr Benjamin Tucker, of Enfield, which resulted in my acceptance as a suitor for the hand of his daughter. But, as she was his only child, there was some hesitation in giving her to be the wife of a widower with three children. This difficulty was, however, overcome, and we were married in Enfield church, on March 3, 1835.

"I have attempted to delineate her character and history in her memoir. I need not, therefore, dwell upon them here; but I must add, that for beauty and delicacy of holiness, ardour of love to Christ, entire consecration of herself, body and soul, to the duties of a minister's wife, she had few

equals. She had many adventitious recommendations: her figure tall, commanding, and well proportioned—her face more handsome than beautiful, yet full of feminine gentleness and tenderness—her age twenty-nine, so that she had considerable experience of the world and of the Church. Her mind was well cultivated: she had an extensive knowledge of general literature, and especially of the Sacred Scriptures, which a tenacious memory and a sound judgment enabled her to use with remarkable effect. Her perseverance astonished me. Although not much disposed to be indolent myself, yet, by her punctuality, order, and the diligent use of every scrap of time, she took the lead, and maintained it, in works of mercy. And yet she had time to spare for domestic pleasures; and was foremost in the wit, amusements, and merriment of her family and social circle. Her character and talents were largely developed in her new sphere. Most of those who knew her in her days of gaiety were slow to give her credit for the practical sound sense which she brought into exercise when occasion demanded it. How thankful am I that I ever knew her, and how humbled that I profited so little by her almost perfect example!

"Yet, excellent as she was, it was some months before she was properly appreciated by the congregation. It was difficult to transfer their affections from the first pastor's wife to the second. The former had won their hearts by her judicious conduct; the second had to be tried. Many too, who were in the active prime of life when I first went to Reading, were now advancing in years, and were not so ready to form new associations, or to shew the attention that they had done fifteen years before. Yet everything that both she and I

could desire came at last. They found her no common person. Everything that she undertook, although it might be with great diffidence and trembling, was executed with such fidelity and success as commanded the homage of her associates. Through life I have ever observed, that real merit cannot be long concealed or unrewarded. Wait but a little, and wait upon God, and its day shall come as assuredly as the light of the morning. 'Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.'

"Scarcely had she commenced her useful career, before I received an invitation to become the pastor of Surrey Chapel. After grave consultation with my brethren, and prayer for the direction of Heaven, I felt it my duty to decline the request. The prosperous state of the church and congregation at Reading, and its liability to be scattered upon my leaving, together with other weighty considerations, induced this decision. The congregation, which had expected my removal, were overjoyed at my determination to remain amongst them; and both my wife and myself felt it a call for renewed devotedness. It pleased God, however, to place His afflicting hand upon us both at the same time. I had been to Bromley to open a new chapel. The vestry into which I was put, during the preliminary part of the service, was fresh plastered, and the walls ran down with water.* After preaching, although it was a severe frost, I felt that I had taken a severe cold. I had no other means of returning to London than in a gig. Brain fever, with threatening symptoms, ensued, and very severe remedies were employed for my restoration. My dear wife was seized with severe illness,

* Mrs Sherman's Life, p. 33.

and confined to her bed in the next room. In a few weeks I recovered; but on my first venture into the open air, the symptoms returned with increased violence, and the physicians entertained very little hopes of my recovery. Depletion, calomel, blisters, &c., brought me very low, and for months I could do but little. Yet it pleased the Lord to restore both for future usefulness in His Church. I think, however, that from that time I have suffered from cerebral weakness, and have been unable to sit at study so long as formerly.

"About this time I lost my dear brother-in-law, Mr Edwin Grant. I was summoned to his dying bed on the Saturday, and he died in my arms on the Monday. Like his sister, his weakness did not allow him to say much in the hour of death; but his consistent life had long testified that Christ was his hope, and heaven his home.

"About a year and a-half had elapsed since my invitation to Surrey Chapel, and the congregation had not found a minister whom they thought suitable to fill Mr Hill's place. They resolved to send me another invitation, backed by the signatures of 1200 seat-holders and communicants. The circumstances of the town of Reading, and of my congregation, during that interval, had greatly altered. Each pulpit in the Established churches of the town was now occupied by an Evangelical clergyman; and as the majority of the congregation were Episcopalians, many were induced to leave the chapel, and to become hearers in their parish churches. A clause in the trust-deed of the chapel, moreover, empowered the trustees, if an opportunity should occur, to transfer it to the National Church. Most of the remaining trustees had become old, and were anxious before they died to see the

chapel secured for the worship of God according to their own views of church-polity. The principal persons, therefore, were not in their hearts so anxious for me to stay as they had formerly been; although they joined with the multitude in expressing by resolution their high estimation of my character and labours, and their desire that I should remain. I consulted those best capable of judging of the circumstances, and sought Divine direction by special prayer. The cloud seemed to move towards Surrey Chapel, and my inclination and that of my wife to lean in that direction.

"Now came such a test of obedience to the will of God as I did not expect. Two sisters had come to Reading possessed of considerable private fortune, who for some years had shewn me and my family great attentions, and had administered largely to our comforts. One of them died; but the elder survived, and resided in the house next to mine. A private entrance permitted both families to meet at morning and evening prayer. For this service she presented me with £100 per annum; to me a very valuable addition to my income. She had somehow conceived the idea that I had promised that as long as she lived I would not leave Reading. No protestations of mine availed to shake that conviction. Nor would she for a moment listen to any plans for a joint residence in the suburbs of London, where she had formerly resided. No arguments about the superior claims of so large a congregation as that at Surrey Chapel, and the probability, under the circumstances, of the congregation at Reading becoming less numerous, and, by the absence of leading men, less influential, would she receive or try to comprehend. She shewed me her will, in which she had bequeathed £1500 to

each of my three children, and £2000 to myself, besides making me residuary legatee, which would have put into my possession much more than that sum. She had passed her eighty-second year, and was afflicted with a disease which rendered it impossible that her life could be long protracted. Every plea and argument that I could urge was met by her simply taking this will, which she carried in her pocket, holding it up to me, and saying, 'You know how you are interested in this document; the moment that you decide to leave Reading, I will cancel this will.' Relatives and friends whom I consulted urged upon me the interests of my children, and that, as it was probable that her life would be short, I had better remain where I was; especially as I was so useful there, and Surrey was untried ground. I confess that for a short time the struggle was great; but when I considered that the inducement was merely an increase of wealth, and that, so far as I could judge, the voice of God called me to Surrey, I dared not hesitate. Moreover, I considered that the bequest was founded upon a misapprehension, and that after all she might alter her mind and dispose of her property in another way. On the one hand, I conscientiously thought that by removing I should be obeying the will of God; while on the other, whatever I might gain by pleasing my old friend, I should possess it with a sting and a curse. After commending the whole case to God, therefore, I went to her, to shew her the grounds upon which I had arrived at the decision to leave Reading. She heard me for a little while, and then said, 'Then I am to understand that you have made up your mind to go to Surrey? here is my will, I have no further use for it;' and putting it into the fire, she added,

'There, now, I do not want to see your face any more until the day of judgment.' Nor will she; for although I offered her my hand at parting, which she would not take, and made two efforts to bid her farewell, she steadfastly refused to see me, and about sixteen months afterwards, she died at Bath, unhappy, and unsubdued in her resentment.

"After nearly sixteen years' residence amongst an affectionate people, the parting was necessarily a painful one. Remonstrances came from lips accustomed only to commend; wrong motives were imputed to me, such as love of money, ambition, desire for change. The tears and entreaties of those who claimed to be my children in the faith were the hardest to resist; but as these attacks chiefly sprang from love to me, and jealousy of Surrey, I felt sure that all would end well. One of the dearest of all my spiritual children summed up her remonstrances by saying, 'There's one comfort, you can never love another people as you have loved us; we have your first love—always truest and strongest—and you will often look back to Reading with desire for a similar affection.' And if that was a comfort, I had no desire to rob her of it. But after the first burst of passionate feeling had subsided, never could a people display more real sorrow at the loss of a pastor, or exercise more faith in submission to the will of God. We had several meetings for conference and prayer, but they were deprived of one point of interest which usually follows the resignation of a minister—viz., conversation respecting a successor. For the trustees immediately took steps to transfer the chapel to the Establishment, and to appoint a minister. There was, however, a very large minority who dissented from the government of the Church of England,

and who felt that they had no alternative but to erect another chapel; they, therefore, bent their efforts to that end, and in a short time accomplished it.

"I also visited each of the village stations, and took my leave of the people, whose affection was demonstrated in many gratifying ways.

"I took my leave of the Reading congregation on Sunday evening, August 28, 1836. Long before the time of service, all the avenues to the chapel were crowded, and many went away who could not hear. During the service, the dense mass of hearers was occasionally deeply affected. The text was 2 John 8, 'Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.' To myself it was anything but a comfortable service. The heat, pressure, and feeling, were very overpowering. The sermon was published, but it had only an immediate and local interest. Yet four editions were called for in a month, and many thousands both of the authorised and of pirated editions were sold.

"In reviewing my ministry and abode at Reading, I have cause for very great gratitude. It was a place where there was much eminent piety. The sphere was suited to my taste: it was not too large, and it was constituted by a pleasant and intelligent society, together with a large number of the poor. It grew under my culture; the supplementary churches gave me a knowledge of, and an interest in, agricultural labourers, and taught me to sympathise with their ignorance and social privations. Many angles were rubbed off by collisions with educated men and refined women. Friendships of the most refreshing and enduring character

were formed. I had free access to the houses of both poor and rich, and learnt many lessons in the Divine life, and in ministerial experience. Many events called for special supplication, and sustained the power and constancy of devotion. At Reading, I buried my precious wife, after as happy and useful a career as falls to the lot of most ministers; and there I left her dear remains until the morning of the resurrection. My trials there—infirm health in myself, my wife, and my family—were a wholesome and useful discipline, and gave a tenderness and experimental savour to my ministrations, which, without such experiences, they might have lacked. And, above all, the large number of young and old who, through the preached word, yielded themselves to God, and cheered my heart by their steady and consistent Christian character, is a perpetual source of joy and gratitude. In that stage of my journey of life I feel sure that the Lord led me by a right way, to humble me, and prove me, and do me good. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.'"

Mr Sherman, as just mentioned in the narrative, took leave of his congregation at Reading in a farewell sermon preached on Sabbath evening, August 28, 1836, and afterwards published. The text was 2 John 8: "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." He speaks first of the things which a faithful minister may say he had wrought:—"Preaching the gospel fully—praying for his people fervently—practising the truth constantly." Acknowledging how far short of the ideal of a faithful minister he had himself come, he said:—

"Dear brethren, I am deeply sensible that many defects have accompanied my ministry. In my sermons there

has oft been a great deficiency of zeal, of love, of knowledge, of clearness, of cheerfulness, of awe; but I can say that as far as I have known the truth, as far as I have understood the gospel, I have fearlessly and faithfully preached it. If I know myself, and the motives which have governed my ministrations, my object has been to make all my talents bear on my ministry, that you might be saved by the gospel. I appeal to your consciences, if I have ever spared your sins, and to your understandings, if the way of truth has not been plainly set before you. Oh! the dear delight I have felt in telling of my Saviour's love, and in welcoming sinners to rest on His finished atonement! Ye are my witnesses with what tears of joy I have poured its consolations into your dejected bosoms, and exhorted you to walk humbly with God. 'I have not shunned to declare all the counsel of God.' . . . . A minister of Christ has much, very much to pray for, which relates immediately to his work. My venerable parent, who is now in heaven, used to say, when I first entered the ministry, 'My son, there is little effectively done in the pulpit except two be there—you and your Master.' And if any doubt this, I could but wish him to make the experiment. These are some of a minister's prayers:—'Except thy presence go with us, carry us not up hence.' 'Open my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,' 'that I may be delivered from those who do not believe;' 'that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified.' Oh! if Christians should be prayerful, ministers should be so pre-eminently. And, dearly beloved, we have so wrought for you. It has been my custom for many years to have a Litany-day, to pray for as many of you

as I knew by name, and oft to represent your case before God. Your families, also, and your spiritual and temporal prosperity have not been forgotten. Many a backslider who once gave me joy, and many a sinner on whom the word seemed to make no impression, have been wrestled for at the throne of grace, that God might arrest and save them. Oh yes, hearer, when you have gone away careless and unconcerned about the sermon, your minister has followed you with tears and prayers that God would prick you to the heart, and cause the seed sown to spring up and bear fruit in your life. With what pleasure has he beheld the first tears of repentance in your eyes, and with what joy has he taken them to God as the tokens of hopeful piety. How many of these prayers has he seen answered! How many, he hopes, are still registered in heaven to be answered!"

Next he speaks of the reward which the faithful minister expects:—"The conversion of souls, the holiness of converts, the presenting his people in glory."

And, thirdly, of the means by which the Church may secure to the ministry this reward:—"'Look to yourselves'—*to your state*, as unconverted; as converted, *to your spirit*—of humility, love, activity, sympathy, liberality; *to your conduct.*"

The sermon is one of great power, pungency, and pathos. The tenderness and urgency of its appeals, even as read, are very great—as preached, it must, under the circumstances, have been overwhelming.

CHAPTER V.

ONE of Mr Sherman's experiments while at Reading,—the erection and support of village churches, in which he was remarkably successful, and which was one of his greatest works,—throws interesting light upon a matter that has engaged the attention of many thoughtful men amongst Nonconformists, and that is of vital importance. These little places were erected by the spontaneous liberality of the warm-hearted minister and his congregation, and were in harmony, so far as was possible, with the Episcopalian sympathies of the latter, having most of them towers and bells —things at that time utterly unknown amongst Dissenters, who, however, have since so far vindicated their right to them, that the Gothic style with its belongings has become the rule in their new ecclesiastical structures. But so essentially are such enterprises characteristic of Nonconformity, that all these stations went with the Seceders to Castle Street, and are yet supported by Nonconformists. "In them," says the Rev. W. Legge, "the gospel is still preached, chiefly by lay agency, of which Mr Sherman made more happy use than any other man that I have known."

It has been urged as an objection against the voluntary system of Nonconformists, that while it may be efficient in towns where the congregations can adequately support their minister, it must fail in rural places where no such ability exists. It must be acknowledged that there is some force in the objection; it is, perhaps, the chief difficulty of Non-

conformity: not, of course, that even objections necessarily invalidate the system against which they may be brought. Archbishop Whately has long since taught us, that there is no earthly system or thing against which valid objections may not be raised. The true criterion of judgment is the balance of objections. And Nonconformists may fairly urge against the Establishment an objection as valid, in its inadequate provision for town populations. "It may," says Archdeacon Sandford, "even be stated as the rule, that the clergy are worst remunerated where their duties are most onerous. . . . . As one consequence, we have a lower type of man and feebler ministrations where ability and energy are most required. Ordinarily, our best and ablest men are not found in the most important and prominent pastoral positions. Our town parishes are often inadequately served. And just where commanding qualities are most called for—in the centres of intelligence and civilisation—our Church is often the worst represented; while generally there are complaints, and these loud and increasing, that the homilies of the clergy fall below both the requirements and the literature of our age; and that the press, and not the pulpit, is the instructor of our people."*

"It is," says Dr Hook, "a misfortune, but a fact, that the best educated of our clergy are not to be found where they are most required. . . . . The cause of the evil is obvious. From a variety of circumstances our town livings, with few exceptions, are the worst endowed livings in the Church. The more highly educated of our clergy, therefore, remain at the universities until they retire to country parishes,

* Bampton Lectures for 1861, p. 81.

where their work might be as effectually done by men of inferior mental ability and power." *

If, therefore, we must turn aside from our efforts to make our church-systems more adequate to the spiritual necessities of the population, to the miserable work of defending ourselves or repelling assailants, very fairly may objection be set over against objection—the objection from the inadequate application of a right principle, against the objection from the application of a principle fundamentally wrong: for a principle may be a right one, and yet circumstances, such as obviously exist in English society, may prevent the universal and therefore the adequate application of it. But a principle hardly can be a right one that makes the largest provision precisely where the necessity is the least. It may be that the anomaly is the result of the changed circumstances of society; but this proves only, first, that, unlike the voluntaryism of Nonconformity, the Episcopal tithe system has no self-adjusting power; and next, that in order to adapt it to the present state of England, so as to make the largest pecuniary provision for the largest population, it needs to be entirely reconstructed; for at present it is dependent upon the very voluntaryism that it repudiates, for such remedies of its palpable deficiencies as are provided. One excellency of the voluntary support of religion is, that it is regulated by the natural law of demand and supply. The largest populations secure the most efficient men, and give them the largest remuneration. Even in populations of the greatest poverty, the contributions of numbers compensate for the lack of nidividual wealth; and there are many cases where, in rich

* Sermon for the Church-Extension Society, 1857.

churches, the wealthy man contributes to the support of his own ministry no more than the poorest, but directs the liberality of his more ample means to missions, and schools, and other aggressive Christian enterprises; and where in poor churches the minister is adequately sustained, although not a single person of wealth be found in the congregations. The habit of self-reliance, the healthful, stimulating feeling of religious independence, influence even the poorest, and greatly to their own benefit, to an extent that our Episcopal friends little imagine.

It may be said further, that with a coercive Establishment such as ours, the principle of self-supporting churches is hardly to be reproached with its inadequacy for our rural districts, whatever may be the extent to which the reproach is true. The true question is, Would it be inadequate were the Episcopal Church, with its rural aristocracy and squirearchy, to be as self-reliant as the Congregationalists and Wesleyans, with their rural shopkeepers and farm labourers, now are? That which, in spite of every social and pecuniary disadvantage, they have done in almost every village and hamlet of the kingdom, can leave but very little doubt of that which would be done were their Episcopalian friends to act upon their principles and be influenced by their spirit.

The question is a very grave one, and, perhaps, just now affects the aggressive evangelisation of our country more than any other. It forces itself upon the attention of all who anxiously ask what more the Church of Christ can do.

The circuit system, by which the Wesleyans seek to preach the gospel in villages, is well known. A provincial town is made the centre of a circuit, and one, two, or more ministers

are stationed in it, who have charge not only of the society in that town, but of societies in a dozen or more villages round it. These they visit and preach at in turn, and supply them at other times with such preachers as can be obtained.

The Congregationalists have their Home Missionary Society, the funds of which are supplied by contributions from the churches of the kingdom, and the agency of which is, first, supplementary grants for the sustenance of ministers in small towns who otherwise would be inadequately supported; and next, the employment of agents of its own, who are placed in the centre of a group of villages, in which they open preaching-rooms and schools, or plant chapels, as may be thought best; gathering around them for their assistance in preaching and teaching such lay helpers as they may be able to secure. And thus congregations are gathered and grow to strength, and become self-supporting Congregational churches with their own independent ministers.

The danger and the not infrequent evil here are such as Mr Sherman's principle is admirably adapted to diminish to a minimum. In the exercise of freedom, men are sometimes licentious; and the right of private judgment, not in one thing only, but in all things, is oftentimes very preposterous. There are circumstances in which every wise man will forego the exercise of undoubted rights; at any rate, the right of private judgment, when it would lead him to undesirable conclusions. Social co-operation is possible only by mutual self-denial and compromise. We can hardly wonder that imperfectly-educated people should often think themselves competent to constitute an independent church, when they have neither the wisdom nor the strength to make it

efficient. Wiser men and larger churches look on with regret; but when advice is rejected, they have no power to forbid. Did they possess it, the exercise of such a power would on the whole produce far greater evils than it would prevent; as all despotic suppressions of the abuse of liberty do. Nor can we wonder, perhaps, that men are found willing to become ministers of such churches, even at a stipend less than that of the village blacksmith. Such needy or half-competent men are found in every body—and thus we have the sad spectacle of half-starved churches wholly starving their ministers, and at the same time very probably scandalising the neighbourhood by their janglings, and perhaps their open schisms, to the great satisfaction of such of their neighbours as, having no ecclesiastical liberties at all, cannot indulge in any foolish exercise of them.

Mr Sherman's principle is the only corrective of this evil that is possible to the free churches of Nonconformity. If, according to its strength, every large church in a provincial town would take under its charge villages or hamlets around it, and—either by supporting a missionary to take charge of them, or by placing them under the charge of deacons, or of competent members of the church, and by supplying them with lay or other preachers, and with teachers for their schools—would mature them into life and strength, we should have precisely the combination of outward help and inward self-development that would harmonise order and freedom, subsidy and self-effort. The communicants might be ecclesiastical members of the mother church, and subject to its discipline; while the ordinance of the Lord's supper might be administered monthly in the branch church itself, either

by the minister of the mother church, if practicable, or, if not, then by some deacon appointed by the mother church for that purpose: for undoubtedly the early Christians often brake bread together without the presence of a minister. As a matter of order, in regular churches, the presence and presidency of the minister are most desirable; but where the presence of a minister cannot be obtained, then there is nothing in scriptural precedent to hinder the orderly and devout observance of the ordinance by believers themselves. In branch churches connected with the writer's congregation this has been done for many years, in one instance for eighteen, with the very happiest results, and without a single cause for regret. Or, as in some other cases, where no central mother church exists, it would be practicable for five or six small village congregations to unite into one Christian church or fellowhip, and appoint over them a pastor, to whose support they should all contribute, and who should take the pastoral charge over them all; preaching to them by turns, and providing for their pulpits such supplementary teaching as might be practicable—until they grew strong enough to become self-sustaining churches.

In this way many of the characteristic evils of Nonconformity would be removed. No fellowship ought to call itself an independent church, or to be recognised as such, that cannot adequately sustain its minister and its worship. If it cannot do both, it ought to be willing to be a home missionary station, or a dependent church, like the village churches round Reading. I have permitted myself to indulge in these remarks because the evil is a crying one, and is just now attracting the attention of many of our wisest

men; and because the practical sagacity of Mr Sherman provided against it, greatly to the benefit of his own church, which, by active work, preserved its own life healthy; greatly to the benefit of the little places themselves, which, otherwise, could not have existed at all; and greatly to the edification of the Church of Christ, which was thus spared the sad spectacle of starving ministers and ridiculous independencies. I have had many conversations with Mr Sherman on this matter, and have but given expression to his own mature and deliberate conviction. He regarded his village churches as having, unconsciously to himself at the time, solved the problem of congregations in rural districts. He felt it to be his greatest work at Reading; and the most precious and fruitful experience, both of himself and of his church. He never lost his interest in these village churches. He induced the congregation at Surrey to make an annual collection for them; undertaking to make it up to £50 out of his own private purse, whenever it fell short of that sum. It averaged about £40.

The recollections of Mr Sherman's ministry at Reading are even yet very vivid and very precious to those still surviving who attended upon it. "Nearly thirty years have passed since he left us," says one of them, "and few are remaining of his people. This I can testify, never did any minister more gain the hearts of his people than he. His sermons sent us home to our closets, and made us careful to harrow in the good seed of the word before the birds of the air had time to rob us of it."

The Rev. W. Legge of Reading, who was his contem-

porary during the latter part of his Reading ministry, says. "You know his inimitable pathos both in prayer and in preaching. There is an anecdote told of a careless, Sabbath-breaking man of some energy, who stumbled into his chapel one Sunday-evening, when he was engaged in prayer. He took his stand in the aisle, and seeing the tears rolling down the minister's cheeks and falling on the book as he was pleading for the conversion of sinners, he was aroused, and said to himself, 'This man is evidently in earnest; there must be something in the condition of sinners that I do not understand.' He remained, was instructed, and converted, and became a useful and steady member of the congregation. I need not say that we had happy times of delightful co-operation,—the Wesleyans, the Independents, the Baptists, and Mr Sherman's people,—in village preaching, in the Christian Instruction Society, in the monthly Missionary Prayer-meeting, at which, whenever Mr Sherman had to give the address, the largest chapel was always full, but never at any other time.

"Mr Sherman was extremely kind and hospitable. I remember dining with him in the first May after he settled at Surrey Chapel, when in a company of six there were the representatives of six nations:—Chutih Lang, a converted Chinese; Asaad y' Kayatt, a Syrophenician; Dr Nolan, an Irishman; a gentleman from America; Sherman, an Englishman; and myself, a Scotchman. I shall never forget Mr Sherman's delight when he found that Dr Nolan, speaking in native Irish, and Asaad y' Kayatt from Beyroot, speaking in Syrophenician, could understand each other, so as to hold conversation. It seemed to settle the long-disputed point as

to Ireland having been first peopled by shipwrecked Phœnician mariners. This reunion took place immediately after the missionary sermon. I never saw Mr Sherman more happy in society than he was in this gathering from the uttermost ends of the earth. He was," adds Mr Legge, "one of the most loving and devoted of men."

CHAPTER VI

In the year 1831, some communication with Dr Burgess, Bishop of Salisbury, took place respecting the return of the Castle Street congregation to the Episcopal Church, and the ordination of Mr Sherman as one of its ministers. Many of the trustees and communicants had strong yearnings in this direction; and these do not appear to have been out of harmony with Mr Sherman's own feelings. With his consent, therefore, they presented a petition to the Bishop, praying him to license the chapel, and to give Mr Sherman Episcopal ordination. A correspondence followed between Mr Sherman and the Rev. H. H. Milman, then Vicar of St Mary's, now Dean of St Paul's. Mr Sherman also had an interview with the Bishop, but as Mr Milman insisted that the place should be consecrated and not licensed, that the vicar for the time being should have a veto upon the presentation, and that the number of trustees should be reduced, and should include certain ecclesiastical authorities,—such as the Bishop of the Diocese, the Archdeacon, the Vicar of St Mary's, &c.,—and as the trustees were not willing to comply with these conditions, the negotiations came to an end.

While at Reading, Mr Sherman published several small and useful works, which went through many editions. Amongst them were—"A Scripture Calendar for Reading through the Old Testament once, and the New Testament twice, in the Course of the Year," which passed through twenty-five editions; "A Guide to Acquaintance with God," which passed through twenty editions; "A Plea for the Lord's Day," which passed through ten editions; "The Christian's Death and Heaven, and Desire for both," which passed through six editions; "Memoir of Martha Nutt," which passed through six editions; together with numerous single sermons preached on public occasions. Like his preaching, all his publications were fervent and practical, and were the means of great usefulness in various ways.

Three or four letters from his correspondence during his Reading ministry may close this chapter of his life:—

TO MISS JANE HANCOCK.

"1 Paragon, Clifton, *May* 19, 1826.

"My beloved Friend,—You counted me slack concerning my promise; but I have not forgotten you, nor your afflicted condition. Your very kind note demanded an earlier reply, but writing, at times, has not been a favourite employment; and my relatives have wished for constant information of my state to relieve their anxiety. These, and a set of undesirable nervous feelings, are my apologies to one who knows how to estimate and receive them. I have uninterruptedly (by darkness or temptation) enjoyed the light of God's countenance. It is good for me to be afflicted; and I begin to see already some reasons for this dark and incom-

prehensible dispensation. Yesterday morning, I was comforted beyond measure by the application of that sweet consolation of David, 'Thou wilt shew me the path of life;' and, blessed be His name, I can add, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy.' The path you and I are treading is the *path of life*. A man unaccustomed to look at the end of God's dispensation, cannot think that an affliction, the tendency of which is to deprive him of much of the comfort of life, is 'the path of life;' but we who have tasted that 'He is gracious,' and have felt the soul-reviving truth, 'This God is our God for ever and ever, and He will be our guide even unto death,' know that He can lead in none other than the path of life. The eye of faith sees Him in the path before us, leaving us an example that we should tread in His steps. And it is both safe and pleasant to put our feet into the print of His in any rugged road; for we know that, if we suffer with Him, we shall be also glorified with Him. His society, which constitutes the bliss of heaven, and wakes every lyre redeemed spirits hold, must needs be pleasant. 'The redeemed shall walk there?' Where? In the way of holiness, in company with their Redeemer! And surely when we remember from what He redeemed us, what love was required to redeem us, what wretches we were to redeem, what it cost Him to redeem us, to what astonishing delights He has redeemed us, and what unbounded felicities are reserved for us in another world,—who would not count it an honour, and the highest privilege, to say with David, 'Nevertheless I am continually with thee. Thou hast holden me by my right hand?' The 'nevertheless' is placed against all his ignorance, and it satisfies, makes amends for all his imperfections of sight and mis-

understanding of the road. 'So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee. Nevertheless,' &c. Doubtless were we to point out the path of life, it would be one in which there are few rivers to ford, few fires to pass through, few thorns to annoy our feet, very little darkness above us, and rain to soften the ground and refresh the flowers only when we had not time or inclination to walk abroad; no storms except when we slept, and could neither hear the thunder nor see the lightning flash. But such a path would make this our rest—would turn our wilderness into paradise; and God will not suffer another ever to be enjoyed on earth. Our paradise of delight is above; and the pathway to it is so formed that our progress thither should be hastened—that we should be pilgrims and strangers here, as all our fathers were, and look for and hasten unto a city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God—a better country, that is, a heavenly. Grace indeed macadamises the road, makes the stones smaller, reduces the hills, and raises the valleys. By a load of afflictions put on at that part, and the mattock of pain employed at another, though at first very difficult to pass over, yet for every succeeding traveller, the road is improved. Now, my beloved friend, you and I are travelling over a fresh load of these stones shot in our way; but this is our joy, 'it is the path of life.' By this our patience, and faith, and love are to be tried. Do you love Him now? Are you satisfied with Him now? Will you say still, '*Thou* shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory?' Though He slay you, yet do you trust in Him? This is the patience and faith of the saints—to love Him when He leads through dark-

ness as well as light, and to stay upon Him in unknown paths as well as in the sunshine of communion. Oh, there are but a few steps more, and we tread the threshold of our Father's house, enter into the joy of our Lord, and walk in the streets of the new Jerusalem! Here our shoes are iron and brass, so that nothing shall hurt us; there, we shall walk the golden streets, the Lamb still leading us, and acknowledging to all around, 'These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' Now, we cannot always see the path of life; then, our eyes shall be enlightened, the map of His providence unfolded to us, the light of glory shining upon it. He will shew it to us, explain its parts, and the necessity of those things which appear to us most inexplicable and opposed to us. Oh, then shall we know even as we are known! How shall we love Him then! How glorious will He appear in the eyes of His redeemed! I wonder not that it is said, 'He shall come to be admired in them that believe.' If the sight of a dear friend overcome us now, how shall we be ravished with Him whom, having not seen, we love—in whom, though now we see Him not, yet, believing that we shall hereafter see Him, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Yes, and I shall have capacity for enjoying Him: my vile body freed from disease, nervous irritability, depression, care, and made like unto His glorious body; like Him in holiness, like Him in happiness; and my soul with a sanctified understanding, without the least possibility of error; my will wholly swallowed up in His, my affections returned to their home, and finding their centre only in God my Saviour's breast—all its boundless desires satisfied

—not a thing I can wish or want more than I have; and all this for ever and ever! Amen, Lord! so be it. Only feel confident of this, 'What thou knowest not now thou shalt know hereafter.'

"I thank you, my dear friend, for all your undesired kindness respecting the publication of the sermon. The canvass for subscribers was undertaken without my knowledge; but, as it has gone so far now, it must make its appearance. I cannot, however, specify the time; for I am not allowed to sit long at a time. I do not expect to do much to it before my return.

"My throat has been tortured with caustic for the last week most violently; but the improvement is not yet perceptible: the inflammation produced by the caustic is very great, but the glandular swelling does not subside. It has been with great pain that I have swallowed anything, having a hole in my tonsil, and the uvula elongated and inflamed. Next Monday I intend, God willing, to pass through Reading on the 'Regular,' to consult Sir Astley Cooper in London, as I do not seem to be making any progress. Pray for me, my dear friend, that God may give me the grace of faith to believe His word, and patience to wait His will. Mrs S. is but poorly. The children well. All send their love to you, and your dear sister, to whom present my most affectionate regards. I write for you both. Beg for me an interest in your dear nephew's prayers. With many prayers for your prosperity and recovery, I am, as ever, your unworthy pastor and affectionate friend,

"J. SHERMAN."

TO THE REV. J. STRIBLING, THEN A STUDENT AT CHESHUNT COLLEGE.

"READING, *November 5*, 1828.

"MY DEAR STRIBLING,—I am sorry that my various engagements have not allowed me an opportunity to write to you before; but, being now the Lord's prisoner, I have not been able to attend to my public duties for three days past, in consequence of a severe cold, accompanied with fever; which has produced such a complete prostration of strength that the grasshopper is a burden. Fearing, from your letter to your mother, that you might be in want of some pecuniary aid, I determined to write this evening, and send you a trifle as a token of my good-will and best wishes for your comfort and happiness.

"It is just thirteen years to-morrow (Nov. 6) since I entered Cheshunt. And, oh, what goodness and mercy have followed me from that period till now! I went under the deepest sense of my own unworthiness for the work, and my incompetency ever to open my lips in His name. I thought if God ever made me a preacher, He would perform one of His greatest miracles; although I was clearly persuaded that God had called me to the office. Yet, blessed be His name, He enabled me to seek His face; He sanctified my fears, by drawing me the oftener into His presence for grace and mercy to help me in time of need.

"And to this day, though an unworthy and unprofitable servant, yet He has kept me opening my lips to speak in His name, and giving me a degree of favour and usefulness far

beyond my largest expectations. During these thirteen years I have not been without great and heavy trials, strong temptations, many backslidings of heart and life, much coldness and deadness in study, and many insuperable difficulties in my ministry; but I have learned by these that he who would be a humble, a holy, and useful minister, must walk with God in private.

"Every minister is in public (in God's estimation) that which he is in private. Settle it therefore in your heart that the only means of keeping your soul alive in classical studies is to be an Enoch.

"Make this earth as much a heaven as you can, and heaven will be the sweeter when you reach it; for in proportion as our taste for spiritual things is quickened, shall we relish their fuller enjoyment. A heavenly man is welcome as a minister, go where he will. He that has something to say for Christ, and to men's souls, and of the pleasures of real religion, is the man who will never want a welcome to a Christian's heart; while the frothy, jesting minister will be recollected only with disgust. As I have been the humble instrument of introducing you to the college, I feel the responsibilily I have incurred if you should not prove what you ought to be. And therefore you will bear with me if I urge you again and again to examine the motives which led you to the ministry. See if Christ is precious to you—if you truly, sincerely, supremely love Him; if souls are precious to you—if you are willing to spend and be spent for them; if Christ's word is precious to you, your food, your light, your heritage, and your consolation;—if all these things are so precious that you are willing to be

in poverty, deny yourself, be persecuted, afflicted, and tempted, so that you may by His precious word win precious souls to a precious Christ. We are not ministers of Christ if we cannot. Oh, search every corner of your soul with the candle of God's word! Bring it to the test of His will. And if you find your motives and aims pure, then rejoice at the consolation and encouragement given you. Think of Christ's fulness of grace and Spirit. Think what David the *stripling* could do by faith in God's power and word, and think what John Stribling can do through Christ, who strengtheneth him.

"Christ has a blessed interest in our work. We go not at our own adventure in this work of converting sinners, on which I trust He has sent you; but 'He came that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' 'He died the just for the unjust, to bring sinners to God.' 'He ascended up on high, and received gifts for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them.' And 'He is exalted, that, as a Prince and a Saviour, he might give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins.' Christ is with us, therefore, in *intention* and in *assistance;* who then can be against us? Value time as a very precious commodity. Oh, what a sad account will some students have to render for the precious opportunities squandered away at college! *Recollect what you are*—now separated for grave, serious, important work—even of snatching brands from the flames.

"Oh, let this be water to quench all trifling and buffoonery! And now I commend you to God. Be my comfort and joy, a blessing to the Church, and an honour to the

ministry. This is my fervent prayer for you.—Believe me to be, dear Stribling, your affectionate pastor,

"J. SHERMAN."

TO HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW, MR EDWIN GRANT.

"READING, *March* 25, 1831.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—As you have this day entered on a new scene in life, a few lines may not be unwelcome from one who loves you, and is deeply interested in your temporal and spiritual welfare. Now you are free from those engagements which tended to weaken your frame, do not, as I am sure my dear brother cannot, expect that the cross is either wholly or partially removed. For as we enter into new stations and temptations, each has its own peculiar burdens. And as you are placed, let it be where it will, your oppression may be relieved from some external circumstances, but a heavy cross will remain in others. Yet my dear brother knows that Aaron's rod budded, blossomed, and bore almonds, and Jonathan's rod was sweetened with honey, and Christ's rod, as well as His staff, comforts. He intends us so much real good by His dispensations, that we ought to receive them, not questioning, but rejoicing, except it be to ask what special end the Lord designs. And if we cannot discover that, we may be sure of one thing, that it will be to our eternal advantage to extract honey from the carcase of the lion, and receive heavenly dew from the darkest cloud. And if we live in the exercise of simple faith, we shall do both. Is it not this, my dear brother, to which the Lord specially calls upon you? Wherefore, let my counsel be

acceptable to you. Use some holy violence with your soul; arouse, awake, alarm it. Bring it with its cares, and wants, its troubles and temptations, much oftener into the presence of your gracious Lord. Lay the heaviest end of your load upon His shoulder. Make bold to call him your Lord and your God, and aim to realise the blessedness which results from such an union. Contemplate, now especially and repeatedly, the fulness of Christ, which answers all the poverty, wants, and weaknesses of a distressed spirit. Surely this is enough to make one's heart leap for joy, that we are related to One, and beloved by One, who has promised and is able to supply all our wants. Oh, let us realise what is meant, at least let us aim to do it, by those incomparably precious words, 'I am with you always,' or as it is in the margin, 'all days,'—your suffering, separating, weeping, praying, dying days, I *am* with you. He is with you now, brother; with you to direct by His pillar of cloud and fire—to comfort by His life-giving Spirit. Realise this. Our Lord said, when His disciples left Him, 'Ye leave me alone, and yet I am not alone, but the Father is with me.' Father, Son, and Holy Ghost come to make their abode with you, (John xiv. 16, 23.) Surely any dwelling must be blessed with such society. May Father and Son, by the Spirit, shed abroad their love in your heart, and replenish your soul daily, is the fervent prayer of, my dear brother, yours affectionately,

"J. SHERMAN."

TO THE SAME.

"READING, *May* 31, 1832.

"MY BELOVED BROTHER,—It has grieved me much to learn

that you are no better for your excursion; yet I hardly anticipated that you would derive much benefit. Quiet, in every sense of the word, seems best adapted for your health of body. But I believe that God has wonderfully blessed an opposite course for your spiritual advantage. There is one comfort, however, which I derive from Bristol not agreeing with you; that is, that I shall have a probability of your settlement among us—a circumstance which will be a real joy to me, for I see few likeminded in spiritual things, and none more beloved than yourself in Reading. I hope your visits among the sick have left a sweet savour behind, and I doubt not your usefulness will one day more manifestly appear than it does at present. It is also an employ adapted to your best feelings and wishes, in which you find yourself at home, and in which you can glorify God. And if, during the summer months, you can speak a little among the villagers in any of the stations, it might yet more add to your comfort and usefulness. But I know at present you are in trouble. Do not, I beseech you, give way to despondency. The Lord is on your side, whoever may be against you; and better have Him there than even dearest friends. Oh, my brother, has He ever deserted you? Who opened your eyes and brought you into His kingdom? Who has kept alive the spark of Divine grace in your soul? Who has often turned your mourning into rejoicing, and your sackcloth into gladness? And cannot He do more for you than you can ask or think—either grant you deliverance from trouble in some unexpected manner, or afford you strength to bear and suffer all His will, yea, and rejoice under it? Be, therefore, of good courage; you serve a good Master; you have

good armour, a blessed inheritance, and the most joyful prospect. Oh, lift up your head, the time of redemption draweth nigh! Though we have arrived only at middle age, yet are we brought nearer eternity by bodily weakness than many of our seniors. May we rightly improve the mercy so as to realise eternal things. I am far from well myself. My chest has been very bad the last week. My love be with you.—I am, my dear brother, yours, most affectionately,

"J. SHERMAN."

TO HIS ELDEST DAUGHTER.

"READING, *December* 2, 1835.

"MY DEAREST MARY,—I take up the pen for your dear mamma, who had intended to fulfil her desire to send you some token of her affectionate regard on this your natal day, accompanied with some advice and warning, which her experience would have suggested. But He who orders all our affairs has seen fit to afflict her, and she can accomplish her wishes only by deputy. It is, however, a deputy who takes the liveliest interest in all that relates to your well-being for time and eternity. You have this day entered on your 'teens.' Twelve years have you been in this world. Think you not, my dear, it becomes you to ask this day, on you knees before God, 'What have I been these twelve years? A friend to God, or an enemy to Him? What have I been doing these twelve years? Seeking and serving Him, or striving to oppose His mild and gracious government? What fruit have I brought forth to God these twelve years?' Alas! I fear the fruits of sin, unbelief, and hardness of heart have been more apparent than the fruits

of righteousness? With your conduct to your parents, I have reason to be thankful and satisfied; but when I think that your heart is not wholly given up to God, that you must be still numbered with those whose decision of character is more than questionable, it must be a matter of anguish to my spirit, and will, I trust, be of real grief to yours. The last two years of your life have been very eventful ones to you. In the former, you lost one of the most kind and tenderest of mothers, whose prayers and example will, I trust, ever be present before your eyes; in the latter, you have gained one whose affectionate heart studies your every want, and who would feel it an honour to contribute either to your temporal or spiritual benefit,—one who looks upon you as her own, and whose temper and conduct leave you a bright example to tread in her steps. For such a mercy, I hope you do not fail to thank God; for with all the circumspection and caution I might have used in choosing a wife, I might have been deceived, and my children have found one whose spirit and feelings would have been entirely opposed to their happiness. 'A prudent wife is from the Lord.' This, therefore, has laid you under an additional obligation to give yourself to God, who has dealt so graciously with you. And is it not time you were His? Shall Satan have the best of your time, and strength, and talents, my Mary? God forbid! Therefore let me urge you this day to make a formal solemn surrender of yourself to God, as your God in Christ. Think, that through Christ He has made a way whereby all your sins may be pardoned, your soul sanctified, and heaven secured. Go, therefore, into private this day, and confess your sins fully and unreservedly to God. Pray Him

to shew you yourself in the light of His holy law, that you may abhor yourself and repent in dust and ashes, and that you may embrace Christ as your Saviour and Friend for ever. Pray for that renewing grace which will fit you for the service of God now, and the glory of God hereafter. Adieu, my dear child. Lay to heart all that I have written, and be assured I am, in tender affection, your father,

"J. SHERMAN."

TO MR EDWIN GRANT, WHEN ABOUT TO RETIRE FROM HIS PROFESSION ON ACCOUNT OF ILLNESS.

"READING, *November* 12, 1830.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I happened this day to have a pheasant sent, and hope it will prove good. I trust you will enjoy it as much as I wish you. And how are you, my dear brother? I can hardly expect to hear from yourself, as I am sure exertion would be too great a fatigue to you in your present weakness; but I do exceedingly long to be near you to administer sometimes a word of comfort to your oft-distressed mind. Blessed be God, nothing can shut out our precious Saviour from our dwellings or our hearts. He comes, leaping over the mountains of our sins, and skipping over the hills of our troubles, pardoning the one and soothing the other. His consolations are the true cordials in the time of trial; His promises the staff, and His spiritual influence the rod, which sustains and comforts us, through any dark valley. Open your eye of faith, my dear brother, and Jesus is near you; you shall see Him—your loving, abiding Friend. Oh, to think that you, a friendless sinner, have a Friend in the court of heaven—one who pleads your cause,

loves your person, manages your affairs, and will not suffer you to want any good thing—is a cordial in all your dejection! This raised Job's spirits when his domestic peace was disturbed, his children cut off, his friends turned to foes, his property annihilated, and his person diseased. 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' Do not, therefore, let your business be your anxiety; put it into your Friend's hands,—tell Him your weakness, your incapability, your dejection, and He who has passed through deeper waters than you, will both sympathise with you and succour you. For what does He sit at the right hand of God, but to give gifts unto men, even the rebellious? Why was He tried, tempted, and afflicted? That He might be a merciful and compassionate High Priest. Therefore, think less about yourself, my beloved brother, and more about Him. Never turn your eyes inward, but to magnify the riches of His grace. Where sin and weakness abound, His grace superabounds. When does He call upon us to trust Him?—even when we are weak, and poor, and sinful! O precious Saviour when do we need Thee so much! Surely we ought to love Thee for such astonishing favours! And would you manifest love to Him, my dear brother? Then trust Him now, even now believe both His power and love are exerted for you, even you, and you shall find sweet peace; and precious faith shall increase it: 'He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.' Remember me kindly to Mary Anne; and believe me, my dear brother, yours very affectionately,

"J. SHERMAN."

Surrey Chapel.

"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city."
"He beheld the city, and wept over it."
"His spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry."

"Preaching, administering in every work
Of his sublime vocation, in the walk
Of worldly intercourse 'twixt man and man
. . . . he appears
A labourer, with moral glory girt,
With spiritual graces, like a glory, crown'd."

WORDSWORTH.

CHAPTER I.

FEW positions in life are more arduous than that of a popular minister in a metropolis like London. The occupation and the stress which are occasional with other men are constant with him. He lives under the pressure of incessant demand—under the excitement of constant effort to meet it. Even the blessed Sabbath, which enables the merchant, the lawyer, and the statesman, to lay aside their toil, and to throw off their care, brings to him but another, and that the most exhausting form of his work. Few people consider what it is to deliver three weekly addresses—two of which, at least, must be carefully and elaborately prepared—on a comparatively limited number of topics, to the same congregation. It is true that congregations are wonderfully patient with their preachers; and that such is the precious power of spiritual sympathy, that a warm heart and an earnest purpose will condone a vast amount of feeble and commonplace teaching; but is not this very patience the hopelessness engendered by the inevitable? is it not passive endurance constrained by devout feeling, and at the sacrifice of intelligence, impulse, and strength? We are thankful that the devout feeling is so strong; but it would be better if it were not subjected to such severe tests, and gratified at so great a cost. But so long as large churches devolve upon a

single unassisted minister all the functions of preacher, pastor, bishop, and teacher, it must be so. Whatever the genius, whatever the consecration of the minister, it is utterly impossible that, when he has to preach so constantly, and under such intolerable pressure of other things, he can always preach freshly, instructively, and effectually. Sermons are conditional upon ordinary laws of mind and heart; and, produced by a wearied, jaded man, they can be neither strong in thought nor fervent in feeling. Good and useful things a strong man will always say; but, if he be thus kept at full strain, they will often be but scintillations out of a very opaque atmosphere,—gems, picked up in a very dreary and dusty track,—inspirations, amid a dull waste of unedifying commonplace. In every large congregation there will always be a proportion of hearers inevitably conscious of every iteration of himself by the preacher, and as inevitably getting weary of it. There are others to whom preaching is a kind of religious luxury, and who expect every sermon to be special, if not in its intellectual character, yet in its power of spiritual inspiration, and who are unreasonably dissatisfied when it is not. Conscious of their own duller moods of religious life, they expect their preacher to be always in such a state of spiritual exaltation himself, that his preaching will quicken them. Then, again, in the metropolis, and in all large towns, there is always a great number of strangers who, attracted by the general reputation of a man like Mr Sherman, flock to hear him; unreasonably expecting that, come when they may, they will find him preaching greatly and grandly, as well as earnestly and usefully.

And yet preaching is but a comparatively small part of a minister's work. His spiritual teachings from the pulpit are frequently, perhaps generally, exceeded by his instructions to individuals, who, in almost innumerable ways, seek or demand his counsels or comforts; and often his conversations with anxious souls are of such glad or painful interest that they are more exhausting than sermons. And then there are crowded days of Bible-classes, and pastoral duties, and personal interviews, and committees, and boards, and public meetings, and lectures, and special sermons, and enormous correspondence, each involving labour which of itself might almost suffice for his undivided energies. So that reading, and domestic enjoyment, and recreation, save in a most hasty and incidental way, are almost unknown. The pursuits of the scholar are utterly out of the question;—that is, if these various ministerial duties are to be discharged in any adequate degree. In these, as in many other things, a city minister must be content to "become a fool for Christ's sake."

Scarcely is Dr Lindsay Alexander's description of his own ministerial life, given in a speech at the Congregational Union meeting at Aberdeen, an exaggeration:—"I am ready, without any beating about the bush, to say that we are all underpaid for what we do. I was talking lately with a London business man, a successful merchant. It was about the time bishops were getting made, and we talked about their incomes. He said to me, 'And, if it is a fair question, what do you get?' I told him. 'Well,' he answered, 'is that all you get?' 'Yes; and, compared with what many of my brethren get, it is pretty fair.' 'And what do you do

for that?' I said I would enlighten him upon this. 'In the first place, I compose and write what would be fully two pretty thick octavo volumes—about as much as any literary man, bending over his pen, thinks of doing, and more than some do, in a year. In the next place, I have to do as much speaking every week as a lawyer at the bar in good practice. Then, in the third place, to do as much visiting as a surgeon in average practice would do. And, in the next place, I think I write as many letters as many of you great merchants do.' 'Well,' he said, 'is yours an extraordinary case?' I said, 'Not at all. A man's duties correspond with his sphere. But many of my brethren do as much; some of them, perhaps, a little more.' 'Well,' he said again, 'they may say as much as they please about ministers getting too much for their work, but none of us would do half your work for four times your pay.'"

Nor does it avail to disparage intellectual strength in the preacher, and to insist upon the sufficiency of religious fervour, and of simple pastoral aims. Every spiritual man will, of course, admit that, to be effectual at all, preaching must be full of religious fervour, and single and practical in its aims. Other characteristics of preaching may be important; spiritual characteristics are essential. But "the foolishness of preaching" is not to be identified with foolish preaching. It must not be concealed that fervour and practical simplicity are effectual in preaching in proportion as they are sustained by intellectual strength. A community that has attained to intelligence in other things, that is accustomed to intellectual freshness and force from the press, will not be satisfied, and cannot be edified, by

feebleness in the pulpit. Nor ought the religion of Christ itself, so wonderfully full of intellectual greatness, to be subjected to such a disadvantage. It can hardly be for any man's edification that he should have to be always excusing the head of his religious teacher by the goodness of his heart. From the apostle Paul to Dr Chalmers, God has always wrought the greatest things in His Church, not by sanctified ignorance and feebleness, but by sanctified learning and strength. He, therefore, is unfaithful to the spiritual truth which he ministers, who does not clothe it in the most forceful forms of his intellect, and commend it by the most attractive forms of his imagination. The minister of a large congregation especially, while he may not neglect pastoral duties, and become a mere preacher, must yet strive, and arduously strive, not only to preach the saving and sanctifying truth of Christ, but to preach it freshly and attractively, so as both to edify his ordinary hearers, and to win respect and adhesion to the gospel from those who may hear him but occasionally.

And it is this which the crowded life of a large city, with its incessant and diversified demands, makes so difficult. Unless the man be of great robustness, bodily, mentally, and spiritually—unless he have great readiness and freshness of thought, great fervour and buoyancy of heart—he is soon overwhelmed and disabled; choked by the dust of his course, or worn out by its toil; and either prematurely dies, or, confessedly beaten, retires to some less arduous post.

It is not often that mere popularity injures the moral tone of a minister: his speedy experience of the value of that, the balance of encouragement and discouragement, of

stimulating usefulness and disheartening failure, so well and so wisely maintained by God's providence, effectually prevent this, unless he be a very foolish man indeed. Where a successful minister is made vain by his success, there is commonly some fundamental defect of character that would have exhibited itself in any circumstances.

Perhaps no position in the religious world of England was more arduous than that of the pastor of Surrey Chapel. The magnitude of the congregation, ordinarily consisting of upwards of two thousand persons, and of the church, consisting of thirteen or fourteen hundred communicants,—together with the services, societies, and agents connected with them, —necessarily involved a proportionate degree of labour and care; while the prominence of the mere position, added to the personal popularity of the minister, laid him open to demands for special services, which it was most difficult to refuse, yet impossible to always comply with. Had not Mr Sherman been a man of ready resources and of great working power, and had he not brought with him from Reading a large amount of ministerial capital, he could never have undertaken such a charge, much less have sustained it for eighteen years with almost unparalleled success. Instead, therefore, of wondering that his mind was not more fruitful of literary products, or of thoughtful correspondence, and that his sermons were popular rather than profound, the marvel is that they were produced at all.

CHAPTER II.

For many years, Rowland Hill and the Countess of Huntingdon were associated in evangelical work. When he was cast out of his father's house, and excluded from all communication with his family, on account of his conversion to spiritual religion, she became his firm and liberal friend. "He was," says she, "as my own son,—received into my house, preached in my pulpits, and, as far as I know, a single offence he never had given him." Towards the close of the Countess's life, however, some serious misunderstanding arose between them. Lady Huntingdon was a woman of strong, almost passionate, predilections and prejudices; and her great successes unconsciously engendered a kind of despotic infallibility in her bearing and feeling, which made her very impatient either of independent action or of differing opinion.

Mr Hill was hardly the man to brook anything of this sort. "Though," says Mr Sidney, one of his biographers, "he always treated her memory with respect, and vindicated her character from aspersions during the Wesleyan controversy, I think he was not one of her ladyship's most cordial admirers. The mode in which she exercised her authority was not suited to a mind impatient of restraint." Mr Hill's inveterate vein of sarcasm, directed, it would seem, on some occasion against both the Countess and her party, seems sorely to have wounded her. "The worm," says she, "that still lies at the bottom of the gourd, is his taking us all up into the pulpit, as his merry-andrews, and through his evil jokes leaving a bitter sting behind."

When made conscious of the wounds which he had inflicted upon his old and valued friend, Mr Hill tried, but tried in vain, to heal them. "He has been in London," writes the Countess, "to offer peace; and wanted to preach in our large congregations, and, by getting in, bring nothing but divisions; but I have avoided this." In another letter she says, "Mr Hill cannnot preach for me; this must not be pressed." And her prejudices and partialities were as permanent as they were strong; for there are lines in her will which the recording angel must have wished to blot. In directing the appointment of successors to the trustees of her chapels, she says, "except the Rev. Thos. Wills, the Rev. Wm. Taylor, the Rev. Rowland Hill, and the Rev. T. Pentycross of Wallingford, neither of whom are to be appointed or permitted to preach in any of my chapels." Nevertheless when Mr Hill built Surrey Chapel, she not only gave it her hearty blessing, but sent a liberal donation, and gave her full consent that Mr Piercy, one of her ministers, should preach at the opening.

"I," said she, "who have known Mr Hill from his first setting out, can testify, that no man ever engaged with more heartfelt earnestness in bringing captives from the stronghold of Satan into the glorious liberty of the gospel of our Immanuel; and it will require all the energies of his zealous and enterprising spirit to erect the standard of the cross in that part of London, where ignorance and depravity prevail to such an awful degree. Though I have seen sufficient cause to exclude him from serving in my chapels *for the present*, yet I cordially rejoice in the success that has attended his faithful labours. I knew him when a youth at the university,

when persecuted by his family, when in pecuniary distress; and he was as a son to me—received into my house, and preached for me everywhere. My heart's desire and prayer to God is, that this undertaking may prosper most abundantly, and that very many souls may thus be gathered to the true Shiloh, such as will be his joy and crown in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ."

The history and character of Surrey Chapel are too well known for any lengthened statement respecting them to be necessary. From the circumstances of its origin, the character of its founder, and the magnitude of its congregation, it has occupied a very prominent place in the history of modern evangelical Nonconformity.

Surrey Chapel was one of those individual and irregular efforts for the evangelisation of the world which have already been described. Such movements are the invariable product of free and earnest spiritual life; and they are almost as invariably opposed by existing conventional churches; but they nevertheless belong to the class of things of which the influence upon the spiritual life of the Church, as well as upon the unspiritual life of the world, is most powerful and precious. That they are so invariably denounced, and covered with the opprobrium of lawlessness and dissent, is not so much to their reproach as to the reproach of those who refuse to recognise the necessity and legitimacy of such outbursts of zealous individuality. The Church of Rome, with all its relentless uniformity, has been wiser in this respect. It has known how to utilise what the Established Church of England has always excommunicated, and converted into a dangerous antagonism. It has had, too, its individual re-

formers—its Dominic—its Francis—its Loyola; but instead of treating them as Whitefield, and Wesley, and the Puritans of 1662 were treated, it won them over, and converted them into its very chiefest coadjutors. It has not compelled all its reformers to become Dissenters. A morbid fear of enthusiasm, and a superstitious ritualism, have ever been the great disabilities of the Episcopal Church. Perhaps in God's wonderful government of the world and the Church, full of imperfection and selfishness as they are, the differences and even strifes of the Churches are the only practicable means for the maintenance of truth and of spiritual life. Which of the Churches that Christendom has seen has proved itself fit to be the sole conservator of Christianity? Rather has it been preserved by the mutual questionings and conflicting advocacies of the different Churches; even though these have too often been exaggerated into unchristian intolerance and animosity. Just as storms and earthquakes are needful to preserve the balance of forces in the physical world, so it may be in the moral world; but this only because of the hardness of our hearts—because of the evils that are so inherent in even the best of men. The true and only remedy for them is for each to strive after a Christian tolerance and charity, which shall as much respect a brother's differing thought and preference as his own. So long as the only notion of Christian unity is that all men shall come to think and worship as we do, so long will Christian unity be impossible; for so long shall we cherish the very essence of egotistical selfishness and infallibility, even while we are demanding of our brother that he cast it out. It is much easier to demand catholicity in others than to exercise it ourselves.

Mr Hill's preaching had been chiefly itinerant—in churches, chapels, tabernacles, barns, the open fields, and at street-corners —wherever he could get a hearing, there he would preach. And wherever he went, his preaching attracted great multitudes, and was productive of very great results,—not amongst the poor and ignorant only, but also amongst the cultivated and wealthy. St George's Fields, on the Surrey side of the river, had been the frequent scene of his open-air preaching. At the time of the Gordon riots in 1780, he addressed there as many as twenty thousand people, and with a success inferior only to that of Whitefield in his great open-air preachings in Moorfields. When Surrey Chapel was erected, Lord George Gordon was a subscriber to it of £50. Many considerations, therefore, induced Mr Hill and his friends to contemplate the erection of a Tabernacle similar to the one erected by Whitefield. A meeting to consider the matter was held at the Castle and Falcon, Aldersgate Street, at which John Ryland, Mr Woodgate, and several other gentlemen attended, and at which it was resolved to erect the proposed Tabernacle near the obelisk in St George's Fields, and to call it Surrey Chapel. Fifteen trustees, at the head of whom was Sir Richard Hill, were appointed. Mr Hill was to be the minister, but was to be at liberty for six months of the year,—to be spent either at Wotton or itinerating;—but during this period he was to provide supplies for the pulpit. Amongst his early supplies we find many of the excellent clergymen of that day—Venn, Scott, Pentycross, Berridge, Glasscott, and others. "I forgot to mention to Mr Pentycross," says Mr Hill, in a letter from Wotton in 1786, "that he would look in upon the Sunday school;

that upon those occasions he would look much bigger than my Lord Bishop, threaten the disobedient with vast solemnity and egregious pomp, and applaud the well-behaved with that dignity of approbation that will make them the envy and admiration of all their school-fellows." Mr Hill's design was that the pulpit should be open to evangelical ministers of all denominations. The provisions of the trust-deed were in harmony with the anomalous character of the movement. It states that the doctrines to be preached in Surrey Chapel were to be in accordance with such of the doctrinal articles of the Church of England as were usually assented to by Dissenting ministers of the Independent denomination, prior to the passing of an Act of Parliament in 19 Geo. III. for the further relief of Protestant Dissenting ministers and schoolmasters. These beliefs Mr Hill embodied in a confession of faith. No provision was made in the trust-deed for any specific form of worship, but it was determined that the Liturgy of the Church of England should be used; and, somewhat modified, its use is continued to the present day.

The entire government of the church was vested in the trustees, the communicants having no legal power either to choose their minister or to receive or reject church-members; and in the exercise of the power thus entrusted to them, the fifteen original trustees appointed Mr Hill the minister of the new chapel. Neither Mr Hill nor his friends had as yet learned the strength and the preciousness of a church's spontaneous love.

The chapel was opened in June 1783, and cost about £5000.

Surrey Chapel soon became a great centre of evangelical

and philanthropic power. After providing for the expenses of its own worship, its congregation contributed upwards of £2000 per annum for different religious objects.

A benevolent society for the relief of the poor was founded in 1784, and in connexion with it twenty-four almshouses for poor and pious widows were erected, which have been a refuge for many; also, a school of industry for the instruction and clothing of twenty-four poor children, which has also been a great blessing.

The first Sunday school in London was formed in connexion with Surrey Chapel in 1785. Auxiliaries to the British and Foreign Bible, the London Missionary, and the Tract Societies, were also amongst its earliest agencies.

CHAPTER III.

ALMOST from the commencement of his career, Mr Jay, while yet a student with Mr Winter, was an annual supply at Surrey Chapel. Mr Hill met with him on one of his annual visits to Wotton, and obtained his tutor's permission for him to supply at Surrey; and Mr Jay tells us in his Autobiography, that "the place, though so large, was soon crowded to excess;" and that when he preached the last sermon of his engagement "the yard before the dwelling-house was filled with the lingering multitude, who would not disperse till he had bidden them farewell from the window." For nearly fifty years, he paid an annual visit to Surrey; for thirty of them, of eight Sundays, then of six, then of four, and then of three only. The insertion of two or three of Mr Hill's letters con-

cerning Mr Jay, found amongst Mr Sherman's papers, and which have not been published, may, perhaps, from their interest and instructiveness, be permitted here.

The first refers to Mr Jay's first visit to Surrey, and shews the sagacity of Mr Hill in his prognostications concerning the young preacher:—

TO MR WEBBER, LONDON.

"*June* 12, 1788.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Your willing kindness in attending to the chapel concerns encourages me to trouble you with this. . . . . Next Monday eve, or Tuesday morning, Mr Jay, God willing, will be with you; on that eve, he is to preach at the chapel. I went into Wiltshire a few days since on a design to converse with him upon the business of the chapel; but not being able to meet with him, I left him long instructions in writing; desiring, upon every emergency, that he would consult with you. I mentioned several ministers that I thought would help upon sacramental occasions; since then, another person has occurred to my mind, full as likely to help as any of the others—Mr Myses, that has preached at Surrey Chapel, and is now engaged at a chapel, I think, in or about Artillery Lane, in the neighbourhood of Spitalfields; there are two ministers belonging to that congregation, so that he is frequently at liberty. If he is disengaged on the mornings of our sacraments, it will be very convenient; and if nothing else could be done, I suppose we might defer the sacrament till that Sunday on which he can give us his help. Mr Jay will have time to attend upon these errands himself, as I have already put four guineas into Mr Winter's

hands on behalf of Mr Jay. I have made bold to drop the hint to Mr Winter that a bank-note of ten pounds is what was further designed; and, as our friend is very young, Mr Winter very prudently wishes that nothing further may be offered to him, lest larger donations should prove a snare to so young a man. I believe our young friend will prove one of very extraordinary parts; how far our *dear Tabernacle friends* may want to coax him from us you can judge from what you already know. Mr Winter wishes most of his spare time may be engaged in country places. You will know what hints to give upon these occasions. My love to all. I shall be happy to hear from you soon, and to hear that, through the blessing of God, all things prosper. Mr May is a most excellent man indeed, and grows upon the people daily. Mrs Hill joins in love to Mrs Webber.—Your ever affectionate friend and servant,

"R. HILL.

"I suppose prayers must be read, at least in the mornings; how far a few of them should be read in the afternoon, I leave to you and others. As to the sacrament, though Mr Woolly may do to help, yet he will not do alone."

The second letter is full of characteristic wisdom. It shews that the association of Mr Jay with Mr Hill as his colleague, at Surrey, was in contemplation:—

TO MR WEBBER.

"*July* 1788.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I received your letter with much thank-

fulness for its contents. I should not have hazarded the credit of the ministry of Surrey Chapel by committing it into the hands of so young a man, if I had not received sufficient proof to warrant so bold a step. The best of my poor prayers and maturest deliberation have not been wanting upon this occasion. The deficiencies of my own ministry I perpetually lament; for this single reason, I retire with happiness from London. I make it my perpetual study to consider where my betters are to be found. If I can find them, you are sure to have them, if to be had; herein I am sure I have done my best, and in the general have succeeded. I love to be at a distance from the metropolis, with my little abilities, when the people feel the advantage of my retreat being covered with credit, through the assistance of such ministers as are much better qualified for the work than myself.

"I am beforehand with the wishes of the people respecting a future union with Mr Jay in the ministry; but as yet, have thought it prudent to say but little till I have seen somewhat more. I have known him for above a twelvemonth; the more I know of him the better I approve of him. Still it is very young days indeed with him; but the other day he was but a very poor boy, getting his bread by hewing of stones by the sweat of his brow, so that he can be no loser, but must be a considerable gainer by the gospel. Had he not been called to the ministry, he most probably would have spent his life in the most perfect obscurity. It will be our wisdom to hope for the best, but wait for a while to see if he can weather the dangers of prosperity, and is kept of a meek and lowly temper and disposition. I hope, therefore, the

hasty thought has not been as hastily delivered to Mr Jay as it has been hinted to me; such a step should be attended with the deepest deliberation and prayer. At the same time let me add another caution: do, dear sir, strive to prevent a crowd of injudicious flatterers crushing into the vestry after the service to lift him up with pride. Equal danger he is likely to meet with by being invited out to the pompous dinners of parading professors. It will be much more to his advantage to spend his leisure hours in private, in visiting the sick and poor, and the residue of his ministry among the congregations in the country. As I love the young man very tenderly, I write thus freely about him. I pray God give you all wisdom concerning him. I suppose I shall be in London for the last Sabbath in this month, and the first in August. It is the peculiar request of Mr Winter, who has the care of Mr Jay, that his first visit should be but a short one; if he is kept humble and made useful, the people may depend upon plenty of his future help.

"I am ashamed of the unpunctualities of the ministers. Whenever Mr Wills can assist, I shall be heartily thankful for it. My paper is quite full.—Love to all, your affectionate

"R. HILL."

The third letter, from Mr Jay to Mr Hill, evidently in reply to some wise fatherly counsels, is a beautiful specimen of youthful ingenuousness and piety:—

TO THE REV. ROWLAND HILL.

"*July* 19, 1788.

"HONOURED AND DEAR SIR,—I return you most unfeigned thanks for the speedy return of your paternal letter, and the hints inclosed. I know, dear sir, that from long experience you are to be credited. The consequence of your experience is, you can stand with unspeakable joy, and view the harbour of rest, being near it, while the young probationer is oft called to be the spectator of many an awful wreck, that leaves only a floating plank with this memento, —'Take heed.' In some few instances, I have viewed the scene, and trembled lest the same catastrophe should befall me. Shocking, indeed! O Lord, hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe. I wish, dear sir, you may be satisfied; I neither think you suspect me, (my eye is single,) nor have I reason to imagine you despise me,—you have not so learned Christ. Ten thousand blessings attend you for every watchful endeavour; may it keep my unwary feet, and preserve me from falling! It affords sensible pleasure to find you so tender of, and watchful over me; and the more because I groan, being burdened with a load of unworthiness, which renders me unworthy the notice of any of God's people, much more that of His dear ministers. However, I attribute it to the grand cause, and enjoy it in common with my many mercies, the source of all which is JESUS. He is all our salvation and all our desire. As such I received Him, as such I experienced Him, as such I will preach Him. The cause of God goes on here prosperously. There are many alive to God; others earnestly seeking His face. The

arm of the Lord is victorious. The friends, in general, are still tender and kind to me, and I *endeavour* to be faithful and diligent in serving them. If good is or has been done, I will give Him the *sole* glory of it, who, in His divine sovereignty, subserves His own purpose in any degree by the mouth of babes and sucklings. I am as much surprised at my reception as at my call [to Christian Malford.] I find a longing desire to preach again to the dear country-people in Wiltshire; there I am in, but now I seem out of, my element. They told me, when I was coming to town, that, like the rest of the ministers who went to London, I should soon be drunk with popularity, and forget and neglect them; but I hope my conduct will prove the reverse. I would not, with my present feeling, live in London on any account whatever. Christian Malford will be my home for the future; the people have given me a call, and it is accepted. There I shall have the advantages of retirement and study; and can preach at many villages near, where the gospel is not preached, or where it has been. As I have not preached there for upwards of three months past, they will expect, reasonably expect, my labours for some time when I go back. Mr Webber and I have agreed upon it that I stay over this month; and if Mr Wills can preach here the first Sabbath in August, I shall return before that day: however, I must now stay over the first day of August, which is on a Friday, to preach the annual sermon at St Helen's for the support of the Sunday-morning lecture. The applications for it I could not resist. Some days past I have been confined by a remarkable cold; hope I shall be able to preach to-morrow. Hope the work of the Lord

prospers at Wotton, and many are added to the church. May the Lord be your everlasting guide to direct you, and guard to defend you! Then you will be safe,—no storms within, no trials without; no invidious enemy shall destroy whom the Lord will keep, nor curse whom the Lord hath blessed. I can hardly expect the pleasure of a line from you when I consider your great and many engagements.—I am, honoured and very dear sir, yours to serve,

"WM. JAY.

"*August* 19.—Respects to Mrs Hill, and all at Wotton."

The last letter written by Mr Hill from Bath during a Wotton visit to Mr Webber some two years later,—when Mr Jay was supplying at Surrey, and after he had accepted the invitation to Bath,—is a very amusing illustration of the conservative fears of even the most liberal men, when the modes of thought of their own generation are changing. It is somewhat rich to the younger men of this generation to find good Father Jay, the very pillar of orthodoxy, suspected of incipient Socinianism:—

TO MR WEBBER.

"*December* 1790.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I was in hopes to have seen London by the Christmas-day, but it seems Mr Jay does not mean to leave you till after that time; therefore, that I may stand quite clear of all objections for preaching and for not preaching, while he is there, you must not expect to see me till towards Thursday in the next week.

"I wish I could be there somewhat sooner; but as I am

to travel on horseback it will scarcely be in my power. Will you, therefore, talk with Mr Neale that a little attention may be paid towards bringing matters forward for the 1st of January. Ministers should be invited to help, and the cases of the poor properly prepared. I have wished much to hear how far Mr Jay's ministry is useful and spiritual amongst you: here, people have rather raised my fears concerning him; some say that he is an admirer of the writings of Robinson the Socinian; that he talks about candour in a dangerous style; that he has already adopted that Socinian idea in laying all religious mistakes, not on *the blindness of the human mind*, but on the *obscurity of revelation*. Most of this I would rather wish to suppose to be the voice of *envy* than of *truth*. Though I verily believe that at present he is sound in the faith, yet a spirit of indifference respecting the *importance* of any truth too frequently leads on to the relinquishment of *the truth itself*. I wish, with all my heart, the Lord may lead him forwards and make him more zealous, savoury, and experimental in preaching the word. There are many things in him very amiable; he is certainly a sensible and creditable supply; oh that he may grow in grace! Another hint I drop in confidence: it is here mentioned what mighty doings we have in London when Mr Jay is with us, and what poor doings immediately upon his departure; in short, I have my secret reasons for believing that he has his secret inviters to help us out, and that these invitations have had some influence over him. In two of his late excursions, without one single line of invitation from me, he has framed his plans; and, without one single line of information from me, he executed those plans. *After* I

heard of his intention, I wrote him word that I should leave the pulpit in his care. How far his attachment to Miss Davies may be a sufficient apology for his silence to me, I will not say; but I know this, that this attachment has caused me many a *wet jacket*, many a tiresome ride, and, what, if I had not so many beggars upon my back, I should regard less than anything, an exhausted pocket. Being a *gentleman*, I am repaid in nothing but an abundance of thanks. From what I have felt, and from what I believe will prove a fact, I only hint, that when ministers have come to Surrey Chapel when properly invited, they have been amply rewarded; but when ministers come without such an invitation, will the precedent be a good one if they are to receive the same rewards? Some may say that, as a beggar, he deserves notice; but here it is asserted, that galleries, which is the present design, are no more necessary round his meeting at Bath, than galleries are necessary round the moon. I confess, however, I am in a bad place to hear about Mr Jay, and probably mistaken in what I write; you may see reason to inform me of better tidings than I may expect, and I am sure this will rejoice me. In this city I hear, but say nothing. Take all this as the chat of *entire confidence*. I am partial to a plain, point-blank, Methodist way of speaking. I wish our dear young friend may be thus directed; I love him, and pray for him. This letter is to yourself alone; these surmisings had better not transpire.—Your ever affectionate friend and obliged servant,

"R. HILL.

"I left Bristol but yesterday. I send you Mr Jay's letter

open, that you may see how I deal with him, and how far I treat with him about his future help; be so kind as to put a wafer in it before you deliver it.—Yours, &c.,

"R. HILL."

CHAPTER IV.

MR HILL and Mr Sherman had been friends and correspondents almost from the beginning of the Reading pastorate; and I have more than once heard Mr Sherman say, that it was Mr Hill's expressed desire that he should become his successor at Surrey Chapel. Mr Sherman seems to have first preached in Surrey Chapel in the year 1822. Mr Hadland, one of the elders at Surrey, has notes of sermons preached in 1823 and following years. The first of Mr Hill's letters to Mr Sherman that I can find is dated from Wotton, December 7, 1822, and refers to a service at Reading, which Mr Hill had proposed to take:—

"WOTTON, *December* 7, 1822.

"MY DEAR SIR,—How little we know what a day is to bring forth! When I hinted my intention of visiting Reading, little did I know that, according to the wise and unerring providence of my God, the time of a serious affliction was so near at hand. Walking in a straight, but slippery path, my legs flew from under me, one of my ribs was broken, and my whole frame was severely bruised. By this I became as helpless as a child; and still am so disabled as that it is but just in my power to walk from room to room; and though,

through mercy on the recovery, I am better, I cannot ascertain how far I am to be kept from my return to my Master's work. By this you may judge how incapable I am of making any promises of future labours and designs. Still all is well; it becomes us to labour when we can, and when we cannot we shall be enabled to rest the more contented under the rod. As you now sustain the character of a parent, you will have other duties before you, besides that most important one of a minister of Christ. At present, the mere bodily wants are all your little one can need; but, as its mind begins to open, oh, what care and attention will be needed to regulate that mind in the nurture and admonition of the Lord!—With cordial love to all, believe me to be most sincerely yours,

"ROWLAND HILL."

From a letter, dated March 12, 1824, it appears that Mr Sherman was preaching in Surrey in the early part of that year:—

"LONDON, *March* 12, 1824.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—As the people of Surrey Chapel have had you with them for one Sabbath, they are anxious that your visit should be repeated; and woe betide me if I did not comply with their request, which I am as willing to do as they are eager to require it. I have spoken to Mr Stroud. He tells me their stipulation with you is for eight weeks, at different times in the year; and I have not the least desire to break into such a just and reasonable stipulation. My request, therefore, must be between the people of Reading and yourself; and that shall be a reasonable one also—only for

two Sabbaths, the two last Sabbaths in July. Send me word soon if you can grant my request.

"You know I am to see you in the latter end of May, when I shall have to repeat my thanks to you and all our Reading friends for their kindness and hospitality towards theirs and yours, very sincerely,

"ROWLAND HILL."

And his services seem to have been so effective as to have led to a speedy renewal of the application:—

"LONDON, *March* 17, 1824.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am commissioned to request you to give us only a week-day's visit, to preach a sermon at the chapel on the 19th day of May, at the anniversary meeting of our Village Itinerancy, or Evangelical Association; nearly, if not entirely, on the plan of what is called Lady Huntingdon's Connexion. Our stiff Independents don't like us; we must get a preacher in the middle way. I don't like to preach for that institution in my own chapel. If you will do me the favour to accept the invitation, I shall give bed and board in course, and your travelling expenses, with thanks in the bargain. I shall, I hope, hear a favourable answer to my last. Yours, affectionately,

"R. HILL.

"Love to all."

Two letters without date, but endorsed by Mr Sherman 1824, belong apparently to the close of that year:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—I received a letter yesterday from London, requesting me to invite you to visit

us at London on the day of our anniversary for visiting the sick, and to preach their annual sermon at Surrey Chapel. This is always kept on the 1st of January, but this year that falls on the Saturday; that meeting, therefore, must be defered till the Monday; and, as it is always an evening meeting, one of the early coaches will bring you to my house quite in sufficient time for that service.

"Next week I shall take the Reading road to London from this place, and, for the sake of my horses and myself, shall stop at Reading the 25th inst.; and as one good turn deserves another, and, if I recollect, that is your lecture evening, I shall be ready to preach your lecture for you. And when I see you at Reading, in order to avail myself of your aid on the above-mentioned day, as we have then a public communion and a long service, which requires more hands than one, to obtain your further aid, perhaps I may place another bribe (if it can be so called) before you.

"To all these designs we should put two modest, but very proper, initials—D.V. We know not what a day may bring forth. May we be always ready!—Love to all friends, from theirs and yours, very sincerely,

"ROWLAND HILL."

"LONDON, *Saturday Evening.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—If a family affliction should not prevent, I remind you of a proposal I mean to make. If you will stop over a Sabbath when you come to this place, Monday, January 3, which we must make this year our New-year's day, as we will then be on the spot, I will go to Reading

and serve for you. I cannot expect from you much more of your services but by way of an exchange,—though the people here are anxiously desirous of them,—as the connexion to which you belong has a superior claim to all the time you can spare from Reading to serve them. This is merely a hint; for the sufferings of my wife have been exceedingly severe from an operation performed upon her on Wednesday last, by the surgeon's knife, which has deprived her of the whole of her breast, that she might be preserved from certain death from a fast-growing cancer, which soon would have deprived her most painfully of life. Though she bore the operation most patiently, and seems to recover rapidly, I dare not, for the present, speak positively, though I thus drop the hint.—Believe me to be, with love to all, yours, very sincerely,

"ROWLAND HILL."

A letter from Mrs Hill speaks of Mr Sherman as being at Surrey the last two Sundays in July of that year. The following letter has interest, as referring to the negotiations which had taken place respecting Mr Sherman's, conformity:—

"SURREY CHAPEL, *April* 2, 1831.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Inflammation in my left eye renders me unable to write to any one but by dictation. I am surprised to find you did not receive my message till the other day, as I sent it about six weeks since. My disease, as it continues, naturally prevents me leaving home for the present, where I am confined a close prisoner. I was pleased, however, to accept your invitation, as it seemed to indicate that the re-

port was not a correct one, stating that you were to become a regular son of the Established Church; as such a step would have prevented you from making your different friendly visits to other places not immediately connected with it, at least as it is generally now supposed. And though I heartily wish the Church may be filled with such ministers as yourself; yet, as to myself, I am heartily thankful that I have taken more liberty in preaching the word, than she seems to allow: her bigoted laws allowing her to hold no communion with any Protestant Church but her own. While the Popish priesthood are admitted without any form of re-ordination, the ministers of the purest Protestant Church on earth are obliged to submit to the forms of her re-ordination, as though never ordained before. This was an imposition which entirely prevented many of the more candid among the Puritans from returning into the Church in the wretched days of Charles II. No man has more reason to be thankful for a set of more kind and steady friends than you have in your present line. These matters I must, however, leave to your own conscience, while I yet hope I shall continue unalterably yours, sincerely,

"ROWLAND HILL."

The following letters from Mr Angell James of Birmingham express his estimate of the importance of the pastorate at Surrey Chapel, and of Mr Sherman's fitness for it:—

"SURREY CHAPEL, *May* 8, 1835.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am so deeply impressed with the importance of the subject which I mentioned to you, *en passant*, at Exeter Hall, that I take an early opportunity of again,

and more at length, submitting it to your attention. I am aware of the great comfort and usefulness that are granted to you by our Divine Lord in your present situation; and that it ought to be a very strong motive, and a very loud call and clear voice from the heavenly world, which should cause you to quit it. I am not presumptuous enough to say, that voice is now speaking to you; but I may ask you to listen, whether there be not such a call. The congregation here are still without a pastor; the trustees have none in view; and, therefore, the way is clear for any suitable man. I need not enter into a minute description of the situation, for you know it as well as I do: the magnitude of the chapel, the multitude of immortal souls that fill it every Sabbath, the commanding influence of the station as to locality, are all known to you. For my own part, I do not hesitate to say, that for opportunities of usefulness there is nothing to compare with it, in or out of the Church of England, in the metropolis. The people are prepared to welcome, value, love, and support an able preacher, and a devoted pastor. The latter they have never had, for our good father Rowland was never a pastor. So that a man who would come really and efficiently in that character would bring with him all the charms of novelty. But it is not Surrey Chapel alone that is to be considered, but London. This great city is the centre of Christendom, and exerts an influence which reaches to the very circumference. I consider it to be of vast consequence to the cause of Christ in the world, not only that there should be a body of able ministers, but that *all the different sections* of the church should have such men. The minister of Surrey Chapel should be such a

man; and if he be such, his influence will be felt and acknowledged. From the peculiarity of the circumstances of the chapel, it will not be easy to procure a man in every respect suitable, so that when an eligible person is found and is invited, it is a strong presumption that he should go; it looks like a leading of Providence. Do, then, my dear sir, look at the subject all round and all through: look at it in the closet—before the throne—at the foot of the cross. If usefulness is the first object of a minister's desire, if it be yours, there is everything in favour of Surrey. I would not go so far as to say, that it will be equal to Reading in social enjoyment, in quietude; but I am sure it is, taking all things into consideration, very superior in usefulness. For, in addition to your stated congregation, you will preach to thousands every year that come from the country, or that are occasionally drawn from other congregations, or from the mighty waste of the population in this vast metropolis. May He who giveth wisdom and grace direct you! May you be kept from taking a wrong step, either in refusing or accepting! I have not the pleasure of knowing Mrs Sherman, but that does not prevent me from offering to her, as well as to yourself, my best wishes for many years of health, happiness, and usefulness for you both. Excuse this scrawl, as I write in great haste just before going in to preach.—Yours, very truly,

"J. A. JAMES."

(EXTRACT.)

"EDGBASTON, *July* 24, 1836.

"I have been from home, or I should have replied to your letter before. Very few events of the kind ever gave

me more sincere pleasure than the information that you had accepted the invitation to become the minister of Surrey Chapel. A prize that might excite, and, if gained, gratify any ordinary ambition, was placed within your reach, and you have secured it. May Divine grace qualify you to discharge well and truly, and to the end, the high and sacred trust which you have undertaken! If comfort, apart from usefulness, had been your desire and aim, you had better have declined the invitation; but if comfort, arising out of usefulness, be your pursuit, you are in the way to obtain it. Not, indeed, that the sphere you had at Reading was small,—far from it, for it was larger than most; but still it was not equal to Surrey Chapel.

"J. A. JAMES.

"Rev. J. SHERMAN, Reading."

CHAPTER V.

MR SHERMAN continues his narrative:—

"For the last few years of Rowland Hill's life, his ministry had become feeble, and his congregation had declined in numbers. At his death, it was considerably reduced. Three years and a-half elapsed before I became the pastor—an interregnum which had no tendency to improve it. All the machinery of the church, indeed, had fallen into disorder. Mr Hill not having been a very methodical man, it was difficult to know who were members of the church, and who were not. No elders or deacons were appointed to take charge of any of the spiritual interests of the congregation.

The trustees, some of whom lived at a distance, and never entered the chapel, were supposed to be its officers—the deed giving them all power; but excepting care of the finances, they neither attempted nor understood any diaconal functions; and yet, as in all such cases, they were jealous of interference. Several, perhaps the majority of them, were attached to the Church of England; and any innovation, however great the improvement, was suspiciously looked upon as tending to Dissent. Throughout its history, the chapel had been a place for preaching, for gathering souls to listen to the gospel. Bringing many souls to Jesus had been its glory—a glory which, since the later years of Whitefield's life, had not been eclipsed.

"But I perceived that, to maintain that glory, I must try to reduce the chaotic elements to order. I was to preach to the people ten out of the twelve months of the year. Many things would be expected of me which were not expected of Mr Hill. I must visit the families of the congregation, preside over the schools and institutions, and remain almost constantly in the parsonage, so as to be accessible to the congregation. The prospect of labour appalled me; but, as I believed it was the call of God, I ventured to undertake it, and determined upon such reforms and alterations as the state of the congregation demanded.

"This being done, I entered upon my great work with a trembling heart, and preached my first sermon, as the pastor of Surrey Chapel, on Sunday, September 4, 1836.

"Though better than usual, the congregation was very inferior to that of olden times. The numerous vacant sittings chilled and alarmed me. God was with me in preaching

from Psalm lxxi. 16, 'I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only;'—a text which expressed, as far as I knew myself, what I intended to be and to do—the doctrine of my ministry—the strength upon which I leaned for success, and my thorough determination to prosecute the great work upon which I had entered, with whatever energy I possessed. From the trustees, the church, and the congregation, I received the heartiest welcome. All seemed affected by the discourse, and ready to help me. The evening looked more like former times, and the chapel was nearly filled. As I ascended the pulpit, a donation of £1000 for the London Missionary, Home Missionary, and City Missionary Societies, was put into my hands by one of their liberal friends, and mine, to encourage me. I preached with considerable pleasure to myself, and, as I learned afterwards from candidates for the fellowship of the church, with the desired effect on the audience. The text was 1 Cor. iii. 11: 'For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'

"Several immortal souls, that night, built their hopes upon that foundation. I was much more cheered; the prospect was encouraging; and I retired to rest full of hope and peace. The next Lord's day the chapel was filled at both services. And after that Sabbath, crowds waited at the doors for admission before each service. Additional accommodation was made for the increasing hearers. Every available spot in the narrow aisles had sittings for the poor fitted up. The stairs of the pulpit, the window-sills, and the vestry behind were occupied; and, when the first lesson

was ended, the congregation appeared like a solid mass of men and women, numbering at least 2500 souls. And when they stood up to sing 'a hymn of praise to Christ as God,' the effect was overpowering. They sang in a spirit and with an energy which, till lately, has been unequalled in any place of worship."

The two sermons of the day were published, and are admirable specimens of faithful, affectionate, fervent appeal. The opening paragraphs of the morning sermon thus describe the motives and purposes, the hopes and fears, that actuated the preacher:—

"How vastly different, my brethren, are my present sensations from those with which I have ascended this pulpit on any previous occasion. I stand here, not, as formerly, an occasional supply, but as your pastor; not to visit you for a few weeks, but, if the Lord will, to live and to die with you; not simply to preach to you, but to have the care of your souls; not to look upon you as strangers, but to estimate you as my own people. O God! how responsible and important are the offices which I now undertake. It was not till after much deliberation on the claims of both congregations, frequent consultation with my ministerial brethren, and fervent prayer to God, that my mind was brought to acquiesce in that which I now believe to be my duty. At this you will not be surprised, when you remember that I was stationed amongst a most affectionate people, with whom, for nearly sixteen years, I lived in uninterrupted harmony, which, to my knowledge, was never broken by a single jealousy or heart-burning; amongst whom, too, God has granted signal success to my ministry; and who, without

a dissentient voice, besought me not to leave them. On the other hand, the station proposed to me was one which had been occupied by my venerable friend, your late pastor, who, for peculiar talent, zeal for God, liberality to His cause, and extensive usefulness, had not left his equal in England; a station, too, which has maintained a leading place in the religious world for half a century, and with a congregation requiring the united energies of many ministers to meet their spiritual necessities. The overwhelming sense of my incompetence to fulfil the duties of such a vast field of labour, led me to decline your affectionate invitation. But from that time till it was renewed, a period of about eighteen months, God was pleased, by many circumstances, to make my way clear to my own apprehension. Great changes occurred in Reading; many devoted clergymen came to the churches; and other events took place, which rendered my labours less necessary in that town. Several of the most disinterested and eminent of my ministerial friends unequivocally expressed their opinion that it was my duty to accept the charge of this congregation.

"The fact that three years had elapsed without any other minister being found in whom the affections of the people could unite—the expressed wish of your late pastor, that, if it pleased God, I might succeed him—together with, I think I might say, the almost unanimous desire of this church and congregation, operated to relieve my fear of vacating my former sphere of duty, and to induce me to reply to your second invitation—'I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.'

"Beloved, though I have accepted the charge of your souls, the sense of my incompetency has not abated. I come amongst you this morning in weakness, and in trembling, and in much fear. But the text expresses my dependence and my resolution—oh, pray for me, that they may be maintained in all my labours amongst you! To me, this is one of the most important moments of my whole life. I am entering upon a field of labour which requires the powers of an angel and the strength of a Samson. To execute my duties aright, I have made, and I do make this day in the presence of you all, a solemn surrender of the faculties of my soul, and of the energies of my body, to my Lord and Master; to be sanctified and employed by Him in winning souls to Himself. This is my ambition—this is the high prize I aim to possess; and if God grant me this supreme desire of my heart, the toil which this field of labour will require, and the services which such a congregation will demand, will be pleasant and incalculably interesting.

"Not only to me is this an important moment, brethren, but to yourselves, to your families, to your wives, to your husbands, to your children, to your neighbours, to the congregation at large. You are beginning a new era in your religious history. New duties will devolve upon you, as well as new hopes be excited in you; and I cannot but trust that this will be a day of solemn dedication of people as well as minister to Jesus Christ—when every heart in this assembly shall say, 'Lord, what wilt thou have *me* to do?' and when every service that the Lord Jesus Christ commands shall be undertaken in the spirit of the text, and every heart in the place say, 'I will go,' to that duty or that labour, 'in the strength

of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.'"

The generous individual who put the £1000 into Mr Sherman's hands—£500 for the London Missionary Society, £250 for the London City Mission, and £250 for the Home Missionary Society—was the late Mr Flanders; of whose manifold and quiet munificence this was but one expression.

"It would be folly to intimate that I was always in tune for preaching, and that the sermons were always effective. Both in matter and in delivery many of them were exceedingly defective. Ill health, engagements sufficient to crush any man, and every society and agency expecting me to take a special interest in its prosperity, occupied so much of my time, and so exhausted my energies, that I could not prepare for the pulpit as I ought to have done. But my God and Father, knowing that I was willing to serve Him, and that I delighted to serve Him with the best that I had, did not desert me when the unpreparedness was not occasioned by my indolence. I prepared one new sermon for one part of the Sabbath, and for the other used one of my old Reading preparations. On the Monday evening, after the prayer-meeting, I had to deliver a lecture on the lesson given by the Sunday-school teachers on the following Sabbath. This I carefully wrote and studied. The regular week-evening preaching was on Tuesday. This also I prepared anew. For the Friday morning service I used my old Reading notes. It will easily be seen that five services each week to the same people—for which, if the preacher would long

occupy a useful position, preparation, more or less, must be made—were a great demand upon both mental energies and physical strength. But, besides these regular services, not a week elapsed without a special meeting of some kind or other, in which I was expected to take, and generally did take a part. I formed a theological class for young men, and a monthly class for young ladies. And all know that, unless such classes are carefully prepared for, the interest in them soon flags. But these classes were never more prosperous than in the last year of my ministry at Surrey. It was a great pleasure to get the young ladies to write essays on the subjects treated of, and the young men to bring papers, shewing their diligence and intelligence on other topics which had engaged their attention. But when together some forty to sixty of these papers had to be read and criticised, I have often had to curtail my rest, and forego recreation altogether, to maintain the conviction that I was in earnest with them.

"The call for labour in distant places became oppressively great. I usually devoted one day in the week to a service from home. Although it entailed additional labour, it had this advantage, that it was a change of scene and society, and from the murky and foul air of the metropolis to sunny fields and a sweeter atmosphere. This statement will in some degree account for much feebleness in the pulpit, and shew that my people had both great patience and great affection to accept the provision set before them. There was nothing of this labour that was not required by the circumstances of the congregation, or that, without injury, could be omitted. My conscience did not accuse me of taking superfluous work; but I did sometimes think that a congregation which

expected so much from the ministry should have two or three ministers, each taking the department of work for which he was the best qualified. In this the Romish Church excels us. It has orders for every kind of duty, teachers for every class of learners. Till this method is carried out, to a limited extent at least, in our churches, they will not become the centres of influence and of blessing that God has designed them to be.

"Occasionally God blessed and distinguished the preaching of His Word by remarkable manifestations of His saving power. In the early part of the year 1837, I preached one Sabbath evening from Mark iv. 36, 'And there were also with him other little ships.' The text was striking, and caught the attention of the congregation. The subject was, the earnestness with which men must seek for Christ, and the risks they must be willing to run to find Him. As I proceeded in the illustration and enforcement of the principle stated, there came from heaven a celestial breeze, and one little ship after another seemed to start in search of Christ, until they became a fleet. The feeling upon my own mind was, that I was ready to risk all to go with Christ—so glorious a Saviour, so exalted a Captain did He appear. And this feeling was apparently communicated to the congregation; they were melted into penitence and tears. Never shall I forget the impression made, when at the close of the sermon I gave out the hymn—

'Jesus, at thy command,
I launch into the deep.'

Had it been possible and decorous then and there to have put the question, and to have asked every one willing to em-

bark for the celestial country to hold up the hand, I verily believe almost every one, and most of them with tears, would have uttered, 'Here am I, take me.'

"When I descended from the pulpit, both vestries and the schoolroom were filled with persons anxious to converse with me. I began to talk with them one at a time, and asked a few elderly persons in the church to distribute themselves among those in the schoolroom. In the midst of my converse, and after he had waited for more than an hour, a gentleman of some position knocked at my vestry-door, and said, 'Sir, here are enough to fill twenty boats; what will you do with us?' Exhausted beyond measure, I kneeled down and prayed with them. The place was literally a Bochim. After pronouncing the benediction, I begged of them to retire, and to come and see me on the morrow or Tuesday. The greater number did so; but some were afraid, dear souls, that the impression would wear away, and others were so circumstanced that that was the only time they had, and they begged, as for their life, that I would converse with them for a few minutes. I remained amongst them until eleven o'clock, listening to their repenting vows and anxious expressions of faith in Christ. The excitement sustained me for the time, and a night's rest recruited me. But oh, it was worth dying for to witness such a scene. After suitable examination, many were admitted to the church, eighty-four of whom attributed their conversion to Christ to that sermon. How many joined other churches is known to God alone. The larger number remained for years, many of them remain to this day, amongst the most active and devoted of the members of the church.

"And I must declare, to the honour of Divine grace, that an indescribable influence often accompanied the preaching of the word. During the year 1837, no fewer than two hundred and fifty-seven souls, such as were saved, were added to the church. Some predisposed to unite themselves with God's people were brought to a decision; others who had been waiting to see who would be the minister, associated themselves with the church; others who had been backsliders were reclaimed, and returned to their Father's house: but the majority were new converts from the world. Many a once dead 'Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him.' The tales which parents related to me of the conversion of their once rebellious or indifferent children made my soul glow with wonder and gratitude, and seemed to seal the approval of my heavenly Father of my removal from Reading. Yet, could I have done so, many a time would I have fled into the parsonage without recognising a soul; so deep was my consciousness of having utterly failed in preaching. Sometimes, when most humbled, some one would come into the vestry and tell how he had given his heart to the Lord Jesus, when I had preached at some place in the country, or on some former Sabbath at Surrey; and I was thus taught and encouraged to set the day of adversity against the day of prosperity, and humbly to adore."

CHAPTER VI.

"In the year 1838, the Rev. J. Kirk, now Dr Kirk of Boston, paid me a visit. Full of zeal and eloquence, like Apollos,

he wrought with me a few months to sustain the revival thus graciously begun. Whole weeks, morning and evening, were devoted to services; and God gave special testimony to the word of His grace. On the week evenings, the chapel was crowded as on the Sabbath. Thousands hung upon the fervent lips of the speaker. One of his sermons from the text, 'When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them,' which he applied to the neglected of the population who were never sought out by the Church, was a most mighty and terrific appeal to indolent Christians; shewing how God would require at their hands the blood of neglected souls. It led many to throw their efforts into the visitation and the instruction of their neglected neighbours. Some of his sermons were very tender, and produced the best effects in the conversion of souls. The whole church seemed stirred up to prayer. Families who had heretofore neglected domestic worship set up an altar for God; and many whose piety had been of a very feeble and worldly character, put on their beautiful garments, and arose to a new and blessed life. God 'satisfied their souls in drought, and they became like a watered garden, and as a spring of water whose waters fail not.' I tried to catch a little of the same spiritual influence, and was often amazed at the power of sermons, when prayer had laid hold of the arm of the Lord. On one occasion we had the vestry and three rooms in the parsonage filled with souls crying for mercy, and very often the vestry and two rooms crowded. In such cases we could only pass from one to another, offer a few words of encouragement and counsel, and pray with them ere they were dismissed to their homes. Ministers who had come to hear were enlisted in the service,

and with the deepest interest and emotion witnessed the anxiety of souls to be saved. Some of the old guides amongst us were at first offended at the unusual course of things, and thought that we were too hasty, and that after a short time many would fall away. To satisfy them of the piety of the candidates, and to cure them of their unbelief, I sent them to visit them at their own homes. When they returned, it did my heart good to hear their reports of what they had seen and heard,—parents rejoicing over recovered prodigals, children blessing their parents by introducing religion into their homes, and many whose impressions of religious truth had been long buried under worldly cares and trials, reviving as the corn, and spreading their roots like Lebanon. Their throats would choke and their tears would flow as they related what they had seen and heard. In some cases, parents of children who had been awakened had sent messages, that if any one came to their homes they would murder them; but when the elders went, they found them like lambs, willing to kneel down with them in prayer.

"In that year (1838) two hundred and fifty-one persons were added to the church,—a great and glorious harvest,—so that within two years the number of church members had increased to above eight hundred souls. And, better than all, a spirit of enthusiastic piety was diffused among old and young. It was a great grief to me to lose the services of my dear friend Mr Kirk, who left me to spend some time at Spafields, where the people wished him to settle as their pastor; but patriotism and the entreaties of a flourishing church at Boston prevailed, and he returned to America. He was the only minister from the United States whom I

have heard in this country likely to arouse an English congregation. Mr Nettleton, although specially renowned in his own land for producing a revived religious feeling, was so cold and dead when in England that he seemed to have a special faculty for sending people to sleep. Others were good preachers, but too stiff and formal in their preparation. Reading took the edge off their sentences, and their eyes, fixed upon their manuscripts, lost the fire and tenderness which shew themselves in an earnest speaker. I speak of the general effect of their discourses,—not of their composition, which was often refined and finished. I should say, too, that my knowledge of American ministers was limited; but I think that I should have the concurrent opinion of many of my brethren."

A short narrative of the revival meetings at Surrey Chapel in November 1838, was published by Ward & Co., who employed a reporter to take notes of the proceedings:—

"On the Sunday morning, Mr Sherman preached from Hab. iii. 2, 'O Lord, revive thy work,' explaining the nature of the revival that we should seek, and shewing the means and certainty of its realisation. After which the Lord's supper was administered,—about eight hundred spectators of which were addressed by Mr Kirk. Mr Kirk preached in the evening. A succession of morning and evening meetings was held during the following week, and sermons or addresses were delivered by Mr Sherman, Mr Kirk, Mr Adey, Mr Caleb Morris, Mr Stevenson, Mr Binney, and others." The effect upon Mr Sherman himself may be learned from one of his addresses:—"I do not know how my dear brethren and sisters have felt this morning about this controversy

with God; but I know how I have felt, and I have been thinking that I may be the Achan in the camp. I know that my brothers and sisters are very kind to me. I am satisfied that such is the affection of this people to myself, that they would not believe anything of the kind; but I believe that God has a great controversy with me. I have endeavoured to give myself up to the service of the church; and I have embraced such occasional opportunities for usefulness as have presented themselves: my conscience does not smite me there; but there may be, and often is, great activity and diligence with little prayer and spirituality of mind. Oh, that little heart-affectedness in the study! If God gave me my desert this morning, what would that be? Now, what I want is, that you would pray for the removal of these hindrances in your minister. I am ashamed to make this statement to you; but I felt so oppressed that I could not withhold it. May not one great reason why you have not more prosperity be the backsliding of your minister? Let us pray for the removal of this; and then, perhaps, we may be a happy and useful people."

Mr Sherman's judgment concerning the expediency of special revival services, in a church whose normal state is healthy and prosperous, was somewhat modified in after years. He by no means questioned the general reality of the conversions made or the sincerity of the converts; but he found that the exhausting effect of the excitement continued long after the latter was past. At Surrey, for example, only 102 members were added in 1839, and 63 in 1840, including transferred members. The laws of spiritual life, indeed, are as rigid as the laws of physical life. Stimulants are not

needed in a condition of physical health, although they may be most needful in conditions of depression and debility. Fever is not health, nor is the violence of fever strength. It is not necessarily an improvement of the religious condition of a church to work its feeling up to a high state of passionate excitement. The perfect Master was calm and reverent in the most fervent of His prayers. Even the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, greatly as it excited the wondering disciples and the multitude, produced no such effects as we sometimes hear of in modern revival services.

And yet all life, however vigorous, must and should have its excitements. There is a proper philosophy of religious fervour, which, in our shrinking from extravagance, we are perhaps in danger of disregarding. Our real peril probably lies in contented respectability of religious life and progress—in an orderly, dignified, ritual church-life, that resents any interference with its religious comfort and contentedness—in turning coldly away from every suggestion of usefulness and progress not regulated by church-services. In restricting God's laws of working to our proprieties, it is possible to fall into a disabling excess of caution. The law of all life seems to be propulsion rather than continuous change. Special experiences give law to common life: moments when food is supplied, and hours of sleep sustain intervening hours of strength; conjugal love has its birth in the passion of espousals; parental affection springs from the rapture of the first moments of paternity; common household or social love is nurtured by commemoration-days, birthdays, wedding-days—days of special intercourse and joy. Without the moments of special intensity, the hours of ordinary feeling

could not exist: the common is born of the exceptional, and is sustained by its force: there is no constant ministry of any sustenance of life, physical or emotional. And so it is in religious life: its very existence begins in the pangs of the new birth; its daily sorrow for sin in the agonies of a first repentance; its daily joy in God in the raptures of a first assurance. In the very nature of things, these cannot continue; but all the ordinary holiness, and strength, and joy of a religious life, come out of them. So, again, we have periodical seasons of spiritual nurture, stated seasons of closet devotion, morning and evening worship at the domestic altar, weekly sermons, and church-services. These sustain our intervening religious life and strength. And the same principle will apply to exceptional services. The practical difficulty is to adjust the stimulus needed—to give life its fullest healthy impulse, and not to inflame it to fever. A wise pastor will watch the fluctuations of church-health, and quietly try, by an adjustment of the topics of his sermons and prayers, to give the particular stimulus that he may think needful. But then there may be cases where the spiritual health of a church has become so enfeebled that even strong stimulants are needful to restore it. There may be seasons when special and protracted services—like those in Josiah's time, or in Ezra's time—may be not only natural and reasonable, but necessary for inaugurating a new and higher life in the church. The tendency of all church-life is to become formal, and ritual, and cold; and it may be that the very monotony of ordinary services lulls it to sleep, and something coming with a kind of shock may be necessary to arouse it from its slumber,—something that shall be

startling enough thoroughly to arrest the attention, and protracted enough effectually to possess the feelings. When hearts get very cold, the fire must be applied long enough to warm them. So God often breaks in upon the somnolent contentedness of our ordinary personal life; some great and sudden stroke falls; some terrible calamity brings us in throbbing agony to the mercy-seat, to which, for years, we may have been addressing cold, and almost unconscious words. In such a condition of church-life no faithful pastor will hesitate to have recourse to special and protracted meetings, or to any other legitimate means whereby the church may be quickened. He will rightly judge that it is better to live even at a fever heat, than to die of inanition. These, substantially, were Mr Sherman's later views concerning special revival services; and a year or two after he went to Blackheath, and when the new church there was most rapidly gathering, he thought it wise to hold there a series of special services of a quiet, earnest character, but which admirably served, by fusing its materials, both to weld the church together, and to quicken its spiritual feeling.

CHAPTER VII.

"THE year 1838," continues Mr Sherman, "was marked at the parsonage by the birth of a daughter,—the first child born in the house since its erection fifty-five years before. She was consecrated to God in baptism by Mr Kirk, and became a joy to her mother as long as she lived. To me the event was a source of thankfulness; and it brought out the mater-

nal feelings of my dear wife, and induced such maternal training and experience as greatly tended to increase her usefulness.

"The year 1839 passed without anything remarkable. The congregations continued equally large, and, in order to insure sittings, some of the back seats and window-sills were let to the poor at a nominal rent. I should regret to see any place of worship where no sittings were provided for strangers and occasional hearers; but I am not sure that free seats are an inducement to attend any ministry. A small rental, securing a pew to a family as its own freehold, or the sitting to the individual as his right, is always much more prized, even by the poorest, than pauper accommodation. It also fosters a spirit of independence, which cannot be too much encouraged in hearers.

"In Surrey Chapel the poor regarded the arrangement as a boon, and went to their own seats as independently as the richest of the congregation. Above one hundred souls were this year added to the church; the spiritual history of many of them, and the singular means by which the Spirit of God arrested many of them in their career of folly and sin, were peculiarly interesting. The Bible-classes prospered, and amply repaid my toil; and all the societies and schools were in a most flourishing condition.

"After another year or two, the almost superhuman exertions required of me began to tell upon my health. A general prostration of strength and feebleness of voice were the results; and, as it was then supposed, entire cessation from the duties of the pastorate for about six months was the only hope of restoration. As all the medical men whom I consulted were of this opinion, submission became

an absolute duty. It was therefore determined that, accompanied by my wife and daughter, I should visit Gräfenberg, where Priesnitz had introduced his 'water cure,' where I might have the benefit of pure mountain air, change of scene and of society, and where I might try the effect of a system which multitudes were then extolling as most beneficial to invalids."

Mr Sherman communicated the facts to the elders of the church in the following letter:—

"TO THE ELDERS OF THE CHURCH.

"SURREY PARSONAGE, *March 5*, 1842.

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,—It has pleased God to put His hand upon me, to restrain me from those duties in which I have found my greatest pleasure; and it becomes me to bow to His holy will. I know that He doeth all things well, and presently some event will clearly shew that concealed designs of mercy are made manifest. The physicians assure me that the state of my chest demands immediate repose for a length of time, or ulceration will manifest itself, and render me wholly useless to the Church of Christ.

"Though I should, under present circumstances in the church, be disposed to risk all consequences if I consulted *my feelings*, yet love to them as well as myself seems to intimate that it is my duty to obey my medical advisers.

"I feel much reluctance in leaving the congregation; but if you think it would be desirable for me to resign my charge, that some more vigorous and devoted man might at once take it, I shall feel it my duty at once to yield to your

opinion. Such a step could not be taken without a struggle; yet whatever your piety and wisdom shall dictate, I am ready to obey.

"Give me both your counsel and your prayers, that God may direct me in this heavy trial. May it prove a refining fire, and qualify me to be more useful to the Church of Christ.—I am, my dear friends, very affectionately yours,

(Signed) "JAMES SHERMAN."

Whereupon the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

"1st, That the elders, while they bow with reverence and submission to the Divine dispensation by which their beloved pastor, the Rev. James Sherman, is for a time to be laid aside from the important duties which he has so ably and, with the Holy Spirit's influence, so successfully discharged, express it as their earnest hope and prayer that the total cessation from duty which has been prescribed to him by his medical advisers may promote the restoration of his bodily health, and, eventually, in the Lord's time, lead to his return to his important charge; and, in the words from which he addressed them on the last Sabbath, 'turn to his salvation through the prayers of his people, and the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ.

"2d, That the elders, knowing the anxiety of their beloved minister concerning the spiritual interests of the people of his charge, will be pleased to know, and happy to carry out to the best of their ability, such regulations connected with the duties of their office as he thinks desirable during his anticipated absence. And—

"3d, That, as a testimonial of their grateful respect and attachment to their beloved minister in his present affliction, it will afford the elders great satisfaction to co-operate with the members of the church in such measures, relating to the reception of the ministers who supply during the absence of their beloved pastor, and the expenses connected therewith, as will prevent any encroachment upon the usual funds of the chapel."

"A public meeting," continues Mr Sherman, "was held in Surrey Chapel to commend us to God.

"Few expected to see me return alive; but I believe the vast multitude which assembled that evening sympathised with their pastor chiefly because they knew that his strength had been exhausted in serving them, and they fervently prayed for his restoration to health.

"We started for Ostend by steamer, on March 18, 1842, whence we travelled through Belgium and Germany by railway wherever it was then opened, otherwise by *voiture*, arriving at Freiwaldau, a small town in Austrian Silesia, at the foot of the Gräfenberg mountains, on the 15th of April. As my dear wife has given the details of our journey in her diary, published in her Memoir, it is unnecessary to repeat them here.

"After about two months I began thoroughly to amend, and in pity to the English visitors, and to the foreigners who understood English, and at their earnest request, I undertook a short service on the morning of the Sabbath. We hired a piano from Vienna, by which we were able to sustain the singing in the motley congregation, which consisted of

persons of various religious denominations, who, with the family and occasional hearers, made up an average congregation of about twenty-five or thirty persons."

A detailed account of the residence at Gräfenberg, and of the interesting services there held, is given in Mrs Sherman's Memoir. The following sentences from it may be quoted :—

"In a place like Gräfenberg, where the Lord's day was the chief day for amusement, and no religious ordinances were observed, except those of the Catholics, which were an offence to reason, as well as to the gospel of Christ, anything like a departure from the Protestant indifference which prevailed, by the habit of daily social worship, morning and evening, and of a special service on the Sabbath, could not pass without observation and comment. Singing at worship English tunes and hymns, in the mountains of Austrian Silesia, seemed like direct opposition to the rigid laws of Metternich; yet, as it was confined to the family, could scarcely be condemned by the police. It was, however, soon necessary to increase the number. Several asked to be present at family worship—a request which could not be refused. The attendants averaged about seven, and many a time of refreshing came in those never-to-be-forgotten services. After a few weeks, two gentlemen, Mr Bischoff of Leeds, and Mr Lister from Ireland, in the name of the English residents, and of others who understood English, called, soliciting permission to attend the Sabbath morning service. Consent was given, with the hope of sowing the good seed in some hearts. · At eleven o'clock the service commenced with a Surrey Chapel hymn, sung to a plain

tune, with which many were familiar, and which all could easily learn. A fine full-toned piano, touched with inimitable sweetness and power by Mrs Sherman, sustained the song of praise, and thrilled many hearts with devotion and joy. A portion of the Liturgy was at first used, but it was found too fatiguing, and was obliged to be discontinued. The Psalms and Lessons were then read—a prayer offered—another hymn sung, and then a short sermon of about half-an-hour was delivered, to as attentive an audience as ever assembled in a consecrated edifice. The religious sentiments of the congregation were almost as varied as their countenances. There were, one clergyman, four Episcopalians, an Arian, two Socinians, four members of the Lutheran Church, one of the French Reformed Church, one of the Dutch Church, an Independent, two Plymouth Brethren, three Moravians, and a Catholic Hungarian nobleman, besides the family—making, when all assembled, about twenty-five persons—with occasional additions. To these the great truths of the complete atonement of the Lord Jesus, and justification by His righteousness, through faith alone, with their practical effects, were constantly announced; and the sequel proved not without some gracious fruit—an object which the precious departed never failed most earnestly to seek, by following up the sermon by conversation with those who sought explanation, or offered objection to sentiments uttered—and, above all, by earnest supplication for Divine influence. She thus writes to a friend:—

"'This is a mournful place to live in—so utterly excluded from every religious privilege, that a Lutheran clergyman was imprisoned last summer for reading a sermon every

Sunday to about twenty of his countrymen. We have been very marked in our entire separation from the amusements of the place, which are chiefly on the Sabbath-day; but the English are so venerated here, that we have suffered nothing from it. It has drawn around us a little knot of Germans who can speak English, and are very anxious to know what is right. They have requested to be present at our family and Sabbath services, and though piety in these parties would require the perfect uprooting of all their customs, I cannot but hope that good may be done, "through your prayers and the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ." He is able to give strength for every difficulty; and, oh, what a joyful result of our long journey would this be, if *one* soul were brought to the foot of the cross—if even *one only* should be led to take up his cross, and follow the Lamb.'

"After a few services, the police sent for Schubert, the landlord, and examined him at great length respecting the nature of the service on the Sabbath—who were present, and what was the substance of the address. He was ordered by the inspector not to permit its continuance, and to report to Mr Sherman that it was contrary to law to assemble for any but Catholic worship. A conference was held as to what was best to be done, and it was the general impression that the officer did not wish to disturb the assembly, but that if any report were made of it to higher authorities, he might appear to have done his duty by commanding its discontinuance. It was therefore determined to risk the consequences, especially as he had not sent for the minister, but conveyed a message through a peasant, which the English chose to think was not treating them with sufficient respect, and con-

cluded that if he were obliged to take any further step, he would send more specific information. The services were in consequence continued, to the mutual comfort of the daring little band, with occasional alarms and reports, during the whole four months of Mrs Sherman's residence at Gräfenberg, but without the slightest molestation.

"'We were particularly gratified,' she writes, 'a few days ago, by a young Catholic nobleman who resides in our cottage. He happened to pass our house while we were singing at evening prayer: he stopped till the close of the service, listening to the prayer under the window, with such interest, that he said, he could only mentally pray and sing for a considerable length of time. The next day, he informed us what had occurred, and asked permission to attend our service when he was able. He did so the next evening, and appeared most deeply interested; he told us that for two whole hours after he could do nothing but pray. This has gratified us very much, especially as he is a man of great fortune and family, and is quite independent of that interference which common folks experience. If his influence and property were guided by a sanctified heart, who can tell what a blessing he may prove in his own land, Hungary! These circumstances, in Gräfenberg, are of great interest to us, though in London so small a thing might be little noticed.

"'This morning we had a Jew and an infidel in our house, who were arguing against the inspiration of the Scriptures and the deity of Christ with my dear husband, till I could scarcely bear it. These are *English* people, too. Oh, may we never be numbered with such, but may the riches of that grace which reached and penetrated our hard

and unbelieving hearts reach theirs too, though they now scoff at the truth!

"'Last Sunday, July 17, expecting to leave Gräfenberg on Friday next, my husband took his leave of the little motley congregation. At the conclusion of the service, Mr B—— rose, and with much feeling, said that he was convinced he was uttering the sentiments of all, when he expressed his gratitude for the invaluable services Mr S. had rendered, by acceding to their request, and conducting worship among them with so much propriety and acceptance. Many other expressions of kindness and affection fell from his lips, which, as they came from one who held such different sentiments from those he had been accustomed to hear on these occasions, were very grateful. Most at separating were much affected.

"'On Friday, July 29, a public dinner was given to us, which was preceded by a deputation to my good husband, with a document signed by his little congregation, couched in the most grateful terms, for his services. Nothing could be more pleasant than the banquet: it was given in a summer-house belonging to Priesnitz, on the summit of one of the hills, and commanding a magnificent prospect. The room was decorated with festoons of wild flowers and branches of trees, and the provisions were both ample and elegant. Mr B——, who presided, made a short but pretty speech on the pleasure they had derived from our society, and the benefits which they hoped would result from the services of the Sabbath, and concluded by wishing us, in the name of the whole company, a safe and successful tour to our beloved home. This called up my husband, and in a speech of great feeling

and seriousness, he reminded them of the responsibilities of the past, and of our again meeting to give an account of all our instructions and privileges. After a few faithful remarks, delivered in a playful manner, on the timidity of some who came to that feast, but through fear of the police had kept away from the Sabbath service, he concluded by most affectionately urging them to bear in mind the solemn truths which, in great feebleness, he had urged upon their attention. I hope the last appeal was not without its gracious effect. When he alluded to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and expressed his earnest desire in the warmest and tenderest tones, that all might partake of that feast, and continue in the worship and service of the Redeemer for ever, all seemed to respond a hearty Amen.'"

The following is the address referred to:—

"GRÄFENBERG, *July* 21, 1842.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,—We should be doing injustice to the feelings that animate our little circle, were we to allow you to depart from Gräfenberg without the expression of our grateful thanks for your valuable Sabbath services. But for your kindness, we must, in our absence from home, have been without the opportunity of joining in public worship; and to our anxiety for the enjoyment of this important privilege, and not to any want of consideration for your health, you will kindly attribute our requesting you to officiate, at a time when we could not but perceive that you required repose and relaxation from duty. We trust, however, that the residence of yourself and your amiable family at Gräfenberg will prove, in the issue, to have contributed, under Providence, to the perfect establishment of your health,

and that any inconvenience you may have sustained by your exertions in this far distant field of ministerial labour, will be forgotten in the assurance which we now unfeignedly offer to you, that your services have been most highly appreciated by us all.

"We fervently pray that the Divine blessing may attend you in all your future course; that your valuable life may long be preserved; and that you may contine to enjoy every happiness in the relations both of private and of public life.

"We remain, with sentiments of sincere respect and regard, Rev. and Dear Sir, your faithful and obliged servants,

"JAS. W. LYSTER.
THOMAS BISCHOFF.
DAVID STEUART ROBERTSON.
J. B. SMITH.
HENRY R. O'HARA.
WM. O'SWALD.
H. M. P. M. CONNDER.
ADELE O'SWALD.
CAROLINE BULARD.
THOS. BISSET, A.M.
W. J. BLANCKENBURG,
and her Daughter.
MISS BONAR.
REV. W. M. BARNES.
MRS BARNES.
MRS J. B. SMITH.
CHARLES SEWELL, Jun.
CONSTANCE KLAUCKE.
C. MORRIS, Salffy, Herts."

CHAPTER VIII.

Of course, Mr Sherman was not, during this absence, unmindful of his important charge at Surrey. He addressed to them the following warm-hearted pastoral letters:—

TO THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION ASSEMBLING AT SURREY CHAPEL, LONDON.

"Gräfenberg, Silesia, Austria, *May* 10, 1842.

"My beloved Friends,—May the richest blessings of the fulness of Christ refresh and sustain your souls, and maintain in you that fellowship with the Father and the Son which constitute both the privilege and felicity of His saints; so that you may know and prove your citizenship with that honoured band. Who can measure the love of God to such worms of the dust, such hell-deserving creatures, with the very image of Satan stamped on us by our first father's Fall, and perfected by our own iniquity,—that we should be called the sons of God? It is an infinite condescension to hold fellowship with Gabriel, and afford him the high dignity of a son of God; but to allow us to call Him 'Abba, Father'—to give us a claim to all His perfections, and to all the benefits arising from the atonement of His Son, is such a stoop of the Divine Majesty as exceeds the utmost stretch of human imagination. And what will it be in the great day to hear Him own us as such—to give us the reality and enjoyment of it now, and then to declare to an assembled world, who with our own hearts and Satan have disputed the point

very often, that we are His *very* own—His purchased, adopted, regenerated children!

"Let the gay and dissolute, the ambitious and covetous, seek their own pleasures; ours be the bliss to realise our adoption, and wait for our glorification! And this is the happiness, God is my witness, that I long and pray you may all enjoy. Oh, ye who among the favoured congregation have never tasted the bliss of such a relationship, be persuaded to implore God to open your hearts to receive the great gift. God sends the Spirit of His Son into rebellious hearts that they may call Him Father. I have many wishes for you; but such is our blindness that many of the blessings usually wished, if possessed, might be a curse instead of blessing to you. It would rejoice me to see each of you in health, prospering in all your pursuits, and commanding, by your integrity and amiableness, the homage of every friend and foe. Yet even that would be your ruin if you were not a child of God. It is the Divine approbation and estimation which can alone stand the test of the judgment. Let all my people, then, examine their credentials to this dignity; let them study them, so that in affliction and fierce temptation, when the enemy comes in like a flood, and disputes this vital point with them, they may see such proofs of regeneration that they may rebuff the arch-fiend as our Master did, and gain a complete victory over his assaults. The free promises of the gospel, and the complete atonement of the Lord Jesus, are the safe grounds of a sinner's hope, and must ever be pleaded both with God and Satan. Make use, then, I beseech you, of this armour-proof, and none shall be able either to daunt or conquer you. I have indulged myself in this strain be-

cause it seems to me as if I were in my own honoured and much-loved pulpit preaching to you; and if the letter assumes more of the form of a sermon than an epistle, your love will attribute it to anxiety for your welfare, and prize it not the less. Everything, both in my own experience and in the state of the world, convinces me more and more of the absolute necessity of the influences of the Holy Spirit. He that would thrive as a Christian must be 'filled with the Spirit.' If a church prospers, its members must be like Stephen, 'full of the Holy Ghost and faith.' If conversions take place, and additions are made to the church, He must come down on the assembly, as when at Cæsarea 'the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.' If kings and governments are moved to deeds and noble enterprises for the good of their people, they must spring from the same source: 'The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia.' If the nations now overwhelmed with idolatry and folly be ever converted to the faith of Christ, the same influence must prevail, and therefore we are taught to pray and wait 'until the Spirit be poured out on us from on high.' So that *He*, the great promise of the New Testament, is to be the special object of our faith and prayer; and I do most earnestly beseech the church, that both for themselves, their fellow-members, the whole body of the faithful, and the world, they would implore more of His gracious aid.

"How happy is that people in whom He dwells! how useful that person who is under His direction! Prayer has a wonderful prevalency with God in bringing Him from heaven. How readily will He bestow that which Christ purchased with His blood, and which He is exalted to bestow as the

reward of His meritorious work! Seek out the promises which specially relate to your state before God—the state of the church, the condition of your minister, the state of the world with respect to the gift of the Holy Spirit, and plead them now before God. I was with you in spirit the last day on which the ordinance of the Lord's supper was administered, and my heart went forth that His Spirit might dwell among you; and I saw you in vision *with it*, one of the holiest, most active, and useful churches on earth. In the last letter I received from my and your devoted friend, Mr Cabell, I find there were added to the church some ten or twelve persons during the last month; this news has greatly cheered me. My best wishes and fervent prayers attend them. I welcome them to the church with great joy. Tell them to stand fast in the faith. Assure them, from their absent pastor, that there is no misery but out of the paths of Jesus Christ. If they walk with Him, He will prove Himself every day more worthy of their love, and the world will become less an object of admiration. Now they have turned their backs upon Egypt, and are going to Canaan's happy land, God speed their journey! I give them the right hand of fellowship, even in Austria. I beg that my affectionate remembrances may be conveyed to the sick members of the church. If, like myself, they are banished from ordinances, I send them a portion which has been like cold water to my thirsty soul in this barren land—Deut. xxxiii. 26–29. Oh, what a God has the sick Christian to fly to! At home and abroad, He is the same—a rock, a refuge in every time of trouble! Fellow-sufferers, there is a country in which the inhabitants shall not say, 'I am sick;' the people that dwell

therein shall be forgiven their iniquity; and to have a hope, founded on the oath of God and the blood of the Lamb, that we shall inherit it, assuages pain, and sanctifies every trouble. Assure such as have not yet decided for Christ, that He is the best Master, and that they will never repent entering into His service. The years spent in indecision are very unhappy ones, and are never looked back upon but with sorrow. Perhaps some have determined to unite with the people of God as soon as the pastor returns; but two things render that very uncertain. Either God may call him to another world before he reaches London, or they may never live to see him. What moment can be too soon to love Christ, and to choose the people whom He loves as companions? Had I the power, I would repeat in their hearing with new energy, 'Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.'

"I send my pastoral letter to all my flock. I ask of them their prayers. I know I have them, but I need their continuance. At present, though my health is remarkably good—never better—yet I perceive no real improvement in the local affection of my chest; it is not, however, worse. Sometimes I dream of preaching to them—behold their attention and tears—converse with them in the vestry, and retire to tell the good news to my family that souls are born to God; but, alas! I find it only a dream. Yet there is a reality in prayer, and our spirits oft unite at the same throne. My family unite with me in much affection to all our dear Surrey friends. Perhaps my friends will indulge me when this letter is read, by making the meeting for prayer special for the continent of Europe: its darkness cannot be understood except by our

friends who have lived there. We have special prayer-meetings for the heathen, and none are more grossly so than many of the countries called Christian. The hymns I could wish to be sung are the following:—Hymn 122, tune 'Missionary;' Hymn 371, tune 'Bradley Church;' Hymn 133, tune 'Piety;' Hymn 192, tune 'Intercession.' May the choicest mercies promised in the Charter of your privileges abide with all your spirits, is the fervent prayer, my beloved flock, of your devoted and affectionate pastor,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

TO THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION ASSEMBLING AT SURREY CHAPEL, LONDON.

"MEYRINGEN, SWITZERLAND, *August* 22, 1842.

"MY BELOVED FLOCK,—May all the rich blessings of the covenant of grace, originating from the Father's love, sealed by the blood of Christ, and revealed by the Holy Ghost, fill your hearts and houses, and convey salvation and peace into your souls. How little did I think that the sixth year of my ministry and residence among you would close in a foreign land, and that I should not be present, as at the close of each preceding year, to recount to you the mercies of God towards us as a church and people! Yet here I am, not, I trust, repining, but sometimes amazed at the mysteries of God's dealings, and endeavouring to discover the 'wherefore' He has thus dealt with us. Yet, though I am banished from you for a season, to accomplish His purposes of mercy and love to us both, I should not be insensible, as I am sure you are not, to His boundless goodness towards us in the past year. The elders will detail to you from the church-book

the number of members admitted, and the peculiar cases of interest which have occurred in my absence. Of those who came among us previous to my affliction, many were seals to the ministry, which, in a very heart-cheering manner, demonstrated the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit with the Word; others have been continued in the truth as it is in Jesus, and filled with joy and peace in believing; and a few drawn from dangerous errors which they had embraced. The peace and harmony which have reigned for five years have not been permitted to be interrupted in the *sixth;* and this with so many members in the church, so many tempers and dispositions, so many instruments at work, and such various modes of operation for the attainment of one common end—the salvation of souls—must, to every reflecting mind, be a source of gratitude and joy, that God makes us to 'be of one mind:' and may the Spirit of love shed His influences more and more among us, that we may exemplify more of His spirit who is love, and be renowned among the churches as the people who love one another. The addition which has been made to the elders has occasioned me and many sincere joy. The spirit and application with which they entered upon their duties, and their subsequent labours, especially during my absence, are too notorious to need remark. Yet, I must add, that one great alleviation to the cross I have carried, has been the knowledge of the care and attention which the elders severally have given to the duties and wants of the church. May He increase both their piety and usefulness! I doubt not that this affliction has been sent to stir up my heart to greater devotedness in my work for coming years, and by the help and grace of God I determine

this shall be the result; yet I have learned enough in the Christian life to know that unless constant supplies of grace are afforded, all resolutions are vain. Oh, pray that I may return among you full of the consolations of God in my own soul, that I may be made the happy instrument of distributing them to others. And may I hope that this is the determination of the whole church, that more prayer for the Divine influence, more fellowship with God in private, and more active exertions in Christ's cause, and more sympathy for a world lying in wickedness, shall characterise every member? Then will the year prove like the Sabbath—'the best of all the seven.'

"Through great mercy, my health is remarkably good, and the local affection in my chest continues to improve. I have had scarcely any relapse, and its present state is, I think, better than it has ever been. Let God be glorified for this distinguishing benefit. My heart sometimes overflows with gratitude and hope that I may yet be spared for more extensive usefulness in the church. Again I beg your prayers for a safe journey and voyage home; but, above all, that I may come among you with a heart impressed with a sense of obligation to the dear Redeemer, and ready to do His work and will all my days. Mrs Sherman joins in Christian love to the whole church, with, yours faithfully,

"J. SHERMAN."

To a private friend he writes:—

"GRÄFENBERG, SILESIA, AUSTRIA, *May* 21, 1842.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—How glad I am to send you a token that you and your interests are not forgotten by me; but I

can assure you this is one of the most difficult places to write a letter or sustain any correspondence. The cure occupies the whole time: meals, and bathing, and walking leave but a fragment for letters. How are you? How is your good wife and your family? How goes on the work of God in your soul and in your house? Tell me all about it when you have time. I have also been anxious about your temporal concerns, and long to hear that the prospect has brightened, and something has happened which has given you hope and satisfaction.

"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man or in princes, and I trust that the exercise of faith has been rewarded long ago; if not, wait—it will come. Christ loves us too well to be indifferent to our concerns, or to exercise us longer than is needful for our trial and ultimate happiness. Be strong in the Lord, my dear friend, and in the power of His might. Satan will distrust you, but comfort your heart with this solace—Christ loves us; and if He loves us, all is well for both worlds. Oh, think much of His love, and that will be better to you than all your fears.

"I am going on very favourably; certainly I am not worse, although I do not perceive any great improvement. Yet must I also wait. Sometimes my heart gets sad for want of my delightful work, but I am obliged to fly to the promises and the atonement—the only weapons with which I can fight against despair. And enough, too. 'They overcame by the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony.' The people are much on my heart, and their best interests are often prayed for. Oh that I could but see them, and converse with some of the broken-hearted about the love of

Christ and His power to save. I know they pray for me, and it is much to be borne up on the hearts of so many who have loved the Lord. In answer to all their petitions, I beg my love to them all, and to your household. I send Mrs T—— a present of Psalm lvi. 3. Mrs S. and my daughter, who are quite well, send their united love.—I am, my dear friend, yours affectionately,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

"At the end of four months," Mr Sherman continues, "I had so far recovered my voice and strength as to be able to leave for a tour in Germany and Switzerland. My precious daughter, Selina, who had accompanied us for the benefit of her health, besought us to leave her at Gräfenberg, in the care of some kind friends; as she felt sure that she should perfectly recover if she remained a short time longer. We reluctantly, and against our convictions, yielded to her desire; and, alas! the first letter that we received after our return to England, informed us of her removal to the world of spirits.* Dear child! she was the joy of my heart—a most cheerful and talented girl. She was taken from us at eighteen, in the bloom of her youth and beauty, to flourish in the paradise which sin has never entered. This was the first child that we had lost, and most heavily did we feel the severity of the stroke; but it was mitigated by the manifestations of her early piety, and by her preparedness for the better country. There she was welcomed by her mother, whose prayers for her salvation were all answered.

* See the deeply-affecting letter of Mr Stewart, giving an account of her death, in Mrs Sherman's Memoirs, p. 186.

"We went first to Vienna, and spent some agreeable days in that rather disappointing city; thence to Linz, through the lakes of the Salt Kammergut and the picturesque valleys and towns of the Tyrol to Innspruck. There we met the Rev. F. Cunningham, son of Mr Cunningham of Harrow, who was travelling with a nephew of the Marquis of Cholmondeley. He recognised me, although I did not know him, and proposed that we should join them in travelling through parts of Switzerland—an arrangement which proved a source of great gratification.

"We spent a very pleasant and profitable Sabbath at Feldkirk, he reading the morning service, and I addressing the small congregation from 1 Pet. ii. 9, 'Unto you who believe he is precious.' On the morrow, we started for Ragatz, thence by the Via Mala and the Splugen to Bellinzona, thence to the St Gothard, Andermatt, Devil's Bridge, Altorf, Lucerne, the Righi, the Brunig, Meyringen, by Ober Hasli and Handeck to the Grimsel; whence we returned to Meyringen; thence across the Great Scheideek to Grindelwald, where we engaged a servant to accompany us to London as nursery-maid. The next day we crossed the Wengern Alp to Lauterbrunnen; thence we went to Interlacken, Thun, Berne, Freyberg, Strasburg, and Rotterdam, and reached London, September 22, 1842, having been away from home about six months. Most welcome, after so long an absence, was our own fireside, and most grateful was the joyous reception given us by our beloved people. With renewed health I started afresh in a career of labour, and felt the vigour of manhood revived. It was delightful to have lost the weary sense of exhaustion, and to feel, after

the labours of the Sabbath, as if ready to begin again. The people, too, felt the difference in my more vigorous voice and preaching. The good Spirit was shed upon us, and the work of conversion proceeded steadily, but joyously. Our whole family were in excellent health, and all things seemed to indicate the return of spring after a dreary winter of threatening storms. Blessed be the memory of His love, who by such gracious discipline taught His feeble servant the worth of His favour and the power of His help!"

In the following year, he made a pilgrimage to his daughter's grave; of which he gives this account in a letter to Mr Freeman:—

"MUNICH, *August* 7, 1843.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—By the rich and constant providence of God, I have safely arrived at this interesting city, where the fine arts have so great a friend and promoter in the reigning sovereign. Buildings exhibiting great architectural skill, and paintings gathered from ancient and living artists, —sculptures, shewing some of the finest efforts of the chisel, are brought together, at great cost and after great research, to find a home in Munich. But, alas! there is little care about God and His service. Roman Catholicism taints everything. Churches are decorated to please the eye; the worship is anything but spiritual; and the way of salvation through faith in Christ is never mentioned. Oh! it is a dreary wilderness, when men are taught to satisfy themselves with anything short of the way of salvation which God has appointed. No forms, no ceremonies, no penances, can be substituted with safety to the soul and with honour to God.

And yet this is everywhere the stumbling-stone: men go about to establish in one form or other their own righteousness: all Satan's temptations lead to this. He is satisfied if he can keep the eye from Christ, and faith from the heart, because he knows such a soul is safe in his hands. Oh! how ought we to bless God for such innumerable opportunities, as we have in England, to listen to the sound of an unadulterated gospel! May my country, by the efforts of Tractarians and formalists, never be brought back to the times when it can welcome a return to Popery, and substitute superstition for religion!

"I go with a heavy heart to the grave of my child. Very precious was she to me in life, nor is she less so now: a ripening mind and a sound understanding gave promise of many years of pleasure in her; but the Lord saw best to transplant my beautiful flower into His own garden, and surely I have no cause to complain. Nor do I; but latterly I have felt the loss almost as much as at first, especially as I have traversed spots which vividly bring her to mind,—and shall do, no doubt, more than at present, when I pluck a flower from her grave, and drop a tear over it. But you know, my dear friend, in part, how to feel with me in all this. I heard yesterday from my dear wife that dear Mr Meffin was dead. How much I regret that I was not in town when this happened! Dear man, he is gone to his Master, whom he loved and served, and to enjoy the precious gospel in its fulness, which was the sweetest food to his soul when on earth. He was both a wise and holy man, though much enfeebled by disease. Yet now his wisdom is perfected, and his holiness immaculate. Oh! may my last end be like his! I

understand that you have undertaken to attend to his case, which is a great comfort to me.

"I do enjoy communion with my church and people before God; and trust—indeed I know, I am not forgotten by them, either in the great congregation or in private. Give my unfeigned love to them all, and assure them they are my joy, as I hope they will be my crown of rejoicing.—I am, &c. &c.

"J. SHERMAN."

The autobiography continues:—

"For some years after my coming to Surrey, I was, like most ministers, plentifully favoured with anonymous letters. It is, I know, the opinion of many that such ought not to be written, and that they come only from a cowardly spirit; that no person ought to be ashamed of declaring what he thinks; and that the man who would not in a proper spirit receive what was manifestly intended for his advantage must be unfit for the ministry.

"My experience does not lead me to condemn all anonymous communications.

"Mine were of three kinds: such as came from individuals sincerely concerned for my reputation and usefulness—persons of tender spirit, who would shrink from publicity of any kind, but who, nevertheless, felt impelled, by conscientious regard for the honour of their Lord and the welfare of His cause, to inform me of some fact, or to suggest to me some improvement, or in a still small voice to reprove me for some defect, and intimate the satisfaction which its correction would give. To have destroyed such letters without reading them, or to have denounced from the pulpit such

persons, as I have heard many do, would have been sheer folly. Much as I give myself credit for liberality, I am not sure that I should have preached so comfortably to the person who had said the same things to my face, even though in the same spirit. I had the information or the lesson without any inconvenience, and I could reject or adopt it as I thought proper. A second class of anonymous writers were such as wrote truth in a bad spirit,—truth often very important for me to know, and of which I should have been ignorant if such daring spirits had not broached it, —mixed with acrimonious feelings, it is true, and put in an unfavourable and uncandid light,—still truth, as others viewed it; and which, without apparent intention, the preacher may make use of in his sermons, and thus benefit minds which, with all their hastiness and want of tenderness, are often the most energetic in a congregation, and whom it is not wise to offend. A third class were profane scoffers—men possessed by unclean spirits. There was one man who, to my inexpressible sorrow, seemed stirred by a demon to write to me every week during the revivals amongst us. After reading his first letter, I read no more; but for some time I kept them all locked up, thinking it not improbable that grace might touch even that degraded soul. All at once the letters ceased to come. That man and his communications have been in my thoughts and prayers ever since; and though I have heard nothing of him, and have no suspicion who he could be, yet I should not be surprised even yet, if, before I die, I hear something of his repentance. Sins of that kind, when brought home by the Spirit of God to a conscience which He has enlightened, render it a 'Magor-missabib,'

and take full revenge for their previous unlawful indulgence. This last description of anonymous letters alone gave me uneasiness. From the others, I learned to correct much that was defective in my ministry; I obtained information that was valuable to guide my conduct; and though I had sometimes to curb my resentment, and to refrain from using the pulpit as a place of defence, on the whole, I have, I think, profited by anonymous communications. I think there are many evils connected with the ministry for which apologies would be offered more difficult to bear patiently, and less productive of advantage. I seldom or ever would notice such communications from the pulpit, and, as some persons might seek that kind of importance, they were disappointed, and discontinued writing. So long as the tongue is kept quiet, anonymous communications will do no harm."

CHAPTER IX.

"It is somewhat singular that Mr Hill, who had devoted himself so much to the education and Sabbath instruction of the humbler classes of society, was contented with a small and inconvenient schoolroom, in which for years the comfort and health of the teachers had been sacrificed. The Friday morning service, and the Monday evening prayer-meeting, were held in the same room, and were always inconveniently crowded. It became, therefore, necessary to erect rooms adapted for the classes, committee, and other meetings, which had become very numerous, and a large room for the Sabbath-school. For this about £1800 were required.

Some of the older trustees hesitated, thinking such a large expenditure uncalled-for. Such men of God as Colonel Handfield, Mr Lloyd, and other equally devoted teachers, thought the old rooms good enough, and that greater accommodation was neither imperative nor wise. They feared, too, that the money would never be raised; but I told them that, when I had convinced myself that an effort was a duty, and then prayerfully set about it, God had never failed me both in money and in friends. I could not, however, overcome their caution; but the congregation, which more deeply felt the need of additional accommodation, formed a committee, employed ladies to collect, and in a very few weeks the £1800 were raised. The committee further thought that, as the chapel needed repairing and beautifying, it would be better to do this at the same time. This, however, it was found, would require £1700 more, making a total of £3500; but, to the astonishment of all, the whole sum was raised within twelve months. It must be remembered that, although the congregation was very large, there were but few rich people in it. It was chiefly composed of tradesmen and the respectable poor; but all gave willingly, and without diminishing their contributions to the maintenance of worship, and to the regular agencies of the church.

"In 1840 there was not in the church such an awakening to liberality for the erection and enlargement of places of worship, as later years have developed. I therefore considered it a wonderful effort on the part of the people; and it was the more gratifying as an expression of their sympathy with their minister in his efforts to carry on the cause of God."

When most perplexed and discouraged by the opposition of the trustees to his project of new schoolrooms, Mr Sherman resolved to try what a pulpit appeal would do.

In July 1840, therefore, he one Sunday morning took the text Neh. ii. 20, "The God of heaven, he will prosper it: therefore we his servants will arise and build,"—a sermon which he had before preached at Reading, and which he afterwards preached at Blackheath; and he urged the necessity of what he proposed, and the duty and privilege of every one aiding in the progress of the work of God, making a most felicitous reference to the princes, merchants, goldsmiths, and strangers, who, in the third chapter, are specified as contributing to the repair of the city. One passage is too characteristic not to be quoted:—

"The high priest and his brethren led the host in their zeal, (ver. 1:) they builded the sheep-gate, through which the sheep entered that were to be sacrificed; and when finished, they consecrated it by prayer, as an example to all the builders. For if ministers are men of prayer, their people become such; their living example is as valuable as their doctrine. The princes, magistrates, and rulers took their share: Shallum, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem; Malchiah, the ruler of part of Beth-haccerem; Shallun, the ruler of part of Mizpah; Hashabiah, the ruler of the half part of Keilah; Bavai, the ruler of the half part of Keilah; Ezer, the ruler of Mizpah. They had wealth, influence, servants, and all were cast into the work. The Persian government was too jealous to allow one man to rule; so they appointed two, that one might check the other; yet all united in this work.

"Nehemiah does not describe what he did; but he tells us in the next chapter that half his servants worked, and half defended the workmen; no doubt he took his share.

"The merchants who brought treasures from foreign countries, and enriched themselves and their families by commerce, built, and gave proportionately, (ver. 32.) The goldsmiths, whose profits in trade were greater than many others, were very liberal and laborious; one is specially mentioned, ver. 8, and all in ver. 32. The apothecaries, whom sin had furnished with so much employment in curing disease, and in embalming the dead, cast their respectable gains into the common treasury, and took an ample share in labour, (ver. 8.)

"Persons who lived at a distance from Jerusalem, some of them poor and doomed to servitude, yet would come and help: 'The men of Jericho,' (ver. 2;) 'the men of Gibeon,' (ver. 7;) 'the inhabitants of Zanoah,' (ver. 13.) It is not said that their work was splendid or extensive, like that of the rulers, but they helped.

"Some ladies were engaged in the work: Shallum 'and his daughters,' (ver. 12.) They could not labour, but they gave; they said, We will have a gate, or a part of the wall; something will represent us. Perhaps they had their own portion, or were widows, or devoted their ordinary allowance. Like some in our Lord's day, they could not preach, but they 'ministered to Him;' and like some in Paul's time—the 'women who laboured with him in the gospel.'

"Young men are mentioned with honour: 'the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths,' (ver. 8;) 'Hananiah, the son of one of the apothecaries,' (ver. 8;) one Hanun, who was

the sixth son of his father, (ver. 30.) His five elder brethren probably would do nothing; but though the sixth, and the least honourable, he would work.

"Two men form a partnership, and accomplish together what one could not do alone, (ver. 6.)

"One man appeared to have been, not a householder in Jerusalem, but only a lodger. He had lodgings in the city for health or business, yet he must do something to shew his goodwill to Zion so 'he built over against his chamber,' (ver. 30.) Most of the priests and others built over against their houses, but he against his chamber. Perhaps his landlord was too poor to build more than a little way up, and he, therefore, would build from his chamber, and complete his work.

"Now here is the scriptural pattern: if every one will do his part,—if the priests, the merchants, the goldsmiths, the apothecaries, the princes, the strangers, the young men, the young women, the servants, would do their part, all that we required would be easily and efficiently done."

This could not be resisted; it bore down all opposition; the *vis inertia* of the trustees was overcome; and in a perfect fervour of zeal, money was given and labour promised, and Mr Sherman had no more difficulty.

"The neighbourhood of Surrey Chapel, as a residence, when I first went to it, was, both morally and physically, very superior to its present state. A great part of St George's Fields was not then built upon. Many of the large houses in Blackfriars Road, and in Stamford Street, were occupied by the most respectable families. But after a very few years

it underwent a perfect change: the New Cut, the low neighbourhood behind the chapel, the Mint, and the streets in Lambeth Marsh, became the resort of the lowest characters; and now, I believe, the report of the police is, that a district socially and morally worse is not to be found in London. As the railways were completed, they took away all whose business permitted them to reside a short distance from town. This considerably altered the character of the congregation. Although as crowded as ever, there was a larger proportion of the poor. A few wealthy persons attached to my ministry came from considerable distances,—from Blackwall, Blackheath, Chelsea, Highbury, &c.,—and remained with me to the last; but this was a mere personal attachment, and was expressed often at a great inconvenience. With respect to the poor of that neighbourhood, two things forced themselves upon my attention—their drunken and improvident habits, even of those raised by good wages above the lowest grades. What wretched homes did I often visit, where, but for the curse of drunkenness, all might have been neatness and order! The moral effects upon the whole family were unspeakably distressing. During the last years of my residence at Reading, both my wife and myself had wholly abstained from the use of intoxicating liquors, and without injury to our own health. We did not pledge ourselves to do this, but did it, if possible, to save some poor drunkards in that town who were a great curse to their families, by inducing them to follow our example. I came to Surrey, therefore, prepared to set a similar example. I preached annually to the teetotallers of London,—some of the roughest specimens of human nature who had been rescued

from this vice. Instead of the front seats of the gallery being occupied by ministers, as on missionary occasions, they were filled by coal-heavers, with their white smock-frocks, who not unfrequently gave me pretty audible intimation of their approval. Many were gathered to Christ on these anniversary occasions. But the conquests were small tradesmen, and some of the upper classes of workmen, who were first attracted by temperance statements, then induced to attend public worship, then to take sittings, and then to embrace Christ. I lay great stress upon taking a sitting in a place of worship, and buying a hymn-book to accompany the Bible. It cures wandering habits, gives a home in God's house, and subjects them to the repeated knocks of the hammer of God's Word. I mention one case only. A man who lived by the New Cut had well-nigh ruined himself and his family by drinking. He was persuaded to become a sober man; then he attended Surrey Chapel regularly with his family. The Word sanctified both him and his wife; and by the change of his habits his business prospered, so that in a few years he had gained sufficient to retire, and now lives in respectability and comfort in the neighbourhood of London. Many other cases of great interest came before me.

"Many and apparently good men used to plead that their sick-clubs drew them to the public-house. I made an effort to save them from this snare. At the Congregational Union meeting in Manchester in 1845, I read a paper on 'The Benefits to our Churches of Friendly Societies.' It was a work of great labour to gather the necessary statistics and information; but it was kindly received and highly appreciated by the generality of the ministers present. All felt,

however, that, however felicitous, no scheme of the kind could, without great peril, be attached to the Union. Nor could I make much way with the ministers and churches: each had already some benefit society of its own,—some few flourishing, but the larger number tending to decay and ruin. Besides the monthly meeting of the club at the public-houses in London, there was the attraction of the annual festival of the clubs in the country,—a gathering not to be resisted, although a large amount of money was expended in objects foreign to the purposes and interests of the club. Ministers tried to regulate these gatherings, but drunkenness and all manner of evil were, and are still, the results.

"Defeated in my first object, which was to restrict my exertions to the churches, I determined to try to form a General Mutual Provident Society for the Poor, having its centre in London, and branches wherever such could be formed. Now came my real difficulty. Let no man attempt to form a 'friendly society' on a large scale without he has great faith in his God, great simplicity of purpose, great power in prayer, and faithful friends, upon whose wisdom and assiduity he can rely. I do not say that I possessed these qualifications, but I soon felt how essential they were. The latter came to me afterwards, but not at the moment most needed. At first everything seemed to go wrong: the tables were wrongly calculated; the expenses of advertisements, &c., began to be frightful. My sleep departed from me, and my anxiety was terrible; yet I was never without confidence in ultimate success. It was long before light came. However, the liberality of a few Christian friends, a small band of devoted men as directors, and God gra-

ciously sending us Mr C. Burls, jun., as a secretary, helped on the work, and I had the pleasure of seeing the society established, I may say, in twelve months. Under the judicious and painstaking management of Mr Burls, it has continued to make progress, and has attained its present state of singular prosperity."

On the 21st February 1846, Mr Sherman completed his fiftieth year. The occasion was taken advantage of by the elders, the various societies, and the congregation generally, to present Mr Sherman with congratulatory addresses, also with a time-piece, as a testimonial of affection and esteem. The following is the address of the elders:—

"ADDRESS PRESENTED BY THE ELDERS TO THE REV. JAMES SHERMAN, ON THE COMPLETION OF HIS FIFTIETH YEAR.

"SURREY CHAPEL, *February* 21, 1846.

"DEAR SIR,—We the undersigned, being the elders of the church under your pastoral care, cannot allow this period of your history to pass away without tendering to you our hearty and sincere congratulations on the completion of your fiftieth year.

"You will doubtless remember with grateful feelings all the way which the Lord your God has led you; and we rejoice to know that much spiritual prosperity has crowned your labours; that they have not been in vain in the Lord, but that the seed of Divine truth, which with affectionate earnestness, and in the spirit of love, you have sown amongst an affectionate and united people, is springing up and afford-

ing a solid prospect of immortal fruit, to the praise of the glory of His grace whose gospel you faithfully preach.

"May it be your continued privilege to preside over a still advancing church, all the members of which shall abound in works of righteousness, to the glory of our heavenly Father!

"When we consider the state of the various institutions connected with the chapel, and which have so long been distinguished by tokens of Divine favour, we see cause for much thankfulness to the Father of mercies, that, through the energy and influence you have exerted to advance their prosperity, they have not only been maintained in their efficiency, but widely extended in the same spirit of holy zeal and love that characterised your revered predecessor.

"We beg affectionately to assure you, that we deeply and sincerely unite with all the members of the church in sympathising with you and your beloved wife under her present affliction; but trust that, through the blessing of Him whose ways are just and true, her health may be speedily restored.

"The temporary removal of Mrs Sherman from her beloved family, and also from scenes of extensive usefulness, are trials which Providence has permitted; but we trust you will be enabled to rest on the Divine faithfulness and care.

"We would express our gratitude to God that, through the guidance and teaching of the Holy Spirit, you have been enabled to order your course with humility, and in the exercise of those graces which alone can adorn the character and sustain the usefulness of the Christian minister.

"It is our earnest prayer that it may please Him whom you serve, long to spare you to promote on earth the cause

to which you have devoted yourself; that He may so enrich you with His heavenly grace that you may become increasingly wise to win souls to Christ; that your own spirit may at all times receive the support and consolation of those heavenly truths which you commend to others, so that he who sows and they who reap may rejoice together; that in your private and domestic concerns an especial blessing may attend you; that every member of your family may be a member of that mystical body of which Christ is the living Head; and when at length the endearing relationships of life are ended, may it be our blessed portion to be for ever united in the bonds of the everlasting covenant!—We are, dear sir, your affectionate and devoted friends.

(Signed) "PELHAM STONE.
WILLIAM CABELL.
JOHN TALBOT TYLER.
H. HADLAND.
W. FREEMAN.
W. JONES.
JOSH. BLADES."

In 1846, Mrs Sherman's health having begun to fail, it was determined to accept a kind invitation from the Countess von Reden of Buchwald, in Silesia, and to spend a little time at her noble seat for the benefit of a change of air. Mrs Sherman's journal furnishes a detailed account of this interesting visit. The chief event connected with it was Mr Sherman's introduction to Prince William of Prussia, and his son Prince Waldemar, who came to visit the Countess, and whom he afterwards visited at Fischback, the

seat of Prince William. During one of his visits to the Countess at Buchwald, the late King of Prussia had seen one of Mr Sherman's little books, which had interested him, and led him to express a desire to see Mr Sherman. The Countess, therefore, informed the king of Mr Sherman's departure for England by way of Berlin. Mr and Mrs Sherman had taken up their residence at the Hotel du Nord, in the Lindenstrasse, and on the day after their arrival had gone to Charlottenburg, a royal chateau of Frederick the Great.

A letter to Mr Freeman describes what followed :—

"BERLIN, *August* 4, 1846.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I trust some of the clouds under which I left you have either passed away, or have been softened and beautified by the rainbow of the covenant. It is no small part of our joy to know, that from our darkest troubles our brightest comforts often spring; the Cross shews us both, and, while it is the example, it is also the sanctifier of them all. May God give you the latter, so that repeated strokes may bring you nearer to the God of love!

"Nothing but goodness and mercy have followed us since we left home. Our visit has been made as pleasant as fine weather, the most delicate and assiduous attentions of the dear Countess and her sister, good health, (with the exception of some bad nights of my dear wife's cough,) and unexpected kindnesses, could render it. We arrived here on Friday, and brought a letter from the Countess to Schörning, the king's treasurer, which we sent by post. On Saturday we went to see the famous Gossner, who has preached the gospel in one of the Berlin churches for the

last forty years. We then drove to Charlottenburg, to see the beautiful mausoleum erected for the late king and queen, and the famous sculpture of Rauch. As we were returning home, when about two English miles from our hotel, a servant came in a carriage to say that a messenger had arrived from the king, with an invitation for me to dine with his Majesty and a large party of princes and nobles at Charlottenhof. You may understand my mortification when I found that the train to Potsdam started at two o'clock; the king dined at three, and there was no other train till five. It was a quarter to three when I started from the hotel by courier post, and arrived at the palace, twenty-four English miles from Berlin, by five minutes past five. The carriage drove to the back of the palace, where, under the trees, I observed a long table spread, and about twenty persons, mostly in military costume, standing in little groups around it. I advanced and gave my card to a short old man, with a very intelligent countenance, who, I afterwards learned, was Baron von Humboldt, who gave it to the king. The king immediately advanced, and said, 'Oh, dear Sherman, how glad I am to see you!' and, putting my hand in both his, he shook it heartily, and said, 'I sent a carriage to the railway for you, but I learned from my messenger that you could not come. Have you dined?' I told him that I had taken a little while dressing, but that the pleasure of seeing a Christian king was more to me than food. He then entered into the most familiar conversation with me on various topics; and, introducing me to his nephew, Prince Waldemar, left me to converse with his other guests. Having seen the prince before, we were as old friends. He

then introduced me to Humboldt the traveller, and to Rauch the famous sculptor. The king then said, 'So you take an interest in sculpture?' I replied that I did; and immediately he ordered one of his pages to get a carriage ready, to drive me to see a magnificent piece of sculpture of his late mother, and said, 'I have ordered my aide-de-camp, Count S——, to go with you; he speaks English very well;' and, turning to the sculptor, the very artist whose work I was going to survey, he said, 'Rauch, you would like to go with Mr Sherman?' 'Very much,' said the sculptor. As I was stepping into the carriage, the king said, 'When does Mrs Sherman expect you home?' 'Not till she sees me, your Majesty, as I could not tell her how I should be circumstanced.' 'Very good,' said the king; 'then you will drink tea with me at Sans Souci at seven o'clock, and spend the evening with me.' Away I went to this wonderful monument, Rauch pointing out the parts which interested him, and several particulars which I could have learned only from himself. We then went to Sans Souci, about half an hour's drive through the palace grounds, most beautifully laid out; the orange and myrtle trees in full blossom, and the fountains playing in all directions, some nearly 120 feet high, and, without exception, the most beautiful I ever saw. At half-past six, the king met me at the palace, and said, 'You will be pleased to see my orphan children directly. I have ordered the fountains to play for their amusement to-day. It is an institution for the orphans of soldiers, and they have a *fête* once a year; and this is the day—they will walk through the palace grounds.' We then heard boys playing fifes and beating drums, and saw the procession enter. The

king placed himself on the step leading down to the fountain. Eleven hundred children formed in array, and, passing the king, he patted one on the head, to another he uttered a kind word or religious sentiment, such as, 'You love God, I hope?' 'You will sleep well after this walk;' 'Are you quite well?' 'Where is your brother?' &c. &c. Then, after they had all passed, he said, 'Come, Waldemar;' and, walking fast, he and Waldemar went before a large number. The children, however, ran after him, and at last completely surrounded him and the prince, laying hold of their hands and coats, huzzaing, and manifesting the utmost demonstrations of joy, till the king was obliged to tear himself from them, and fairly run away. Oh, it was a scene of immensely pleasing interest, to see one so highly and so justly renowned and exalted make himself a child for a short time to please orphan children! The Lord reward him for his kindness! And yet no adult attempted to take a liberty with him. There was majesty in it all. As we were hastening to the palace to tea, the king turned round to take breath when ascending a hill, and saw me in the rear, with the aide-de-camp he had appointed to be with me. 'Ah! Sherman,' said he, 'have you been to see this riot?' 'I have, your Majesty; and a more glorious and affecting scene I never beheld. May the children reward your Majesty's kindness!' 'I don't doubt they will,' said the king. We then sat down in the open air between two beautiful fountains to tea; and a very good tea we had. After tea, the king asked me many questions about Surrey, Rowland Hill, and the Countess of Huntingdon, and took great interest in the statements I was able to give him. I told him that I

rejoiced in the publication of the Hirschburg Bible, and that he had done much to spread the gospel by that design and by his patronage. 'No,' he replied, 'it was not my design; it wholly originated with the dear Countess Reden—she proposed it, she revised and corrected it; it was her work altogether;' and afterwards, referring to her age, seventy-three, he said, 'O my God, what a loss would she be if she were to die!' Of Gossner the king remarked, 'Dear old Gossner, he was the only one formerly that preached the gospel in Berlin; now, thank God, there are many.' We went into the palace at nine o'clock to supper; everything, of course, served up in kingly style, but still very simple. At half-past nine, I rose to go by the train, which left at ten. The king rose, and, offering me his hand, said, 'I am very happy to have seen you. Whenever you come to Berlin, let me know; and I hope you will never visit the city without coming to see me.' This most unexpected kindness quite overwhelmed me. I uttered, as well as I was able, a few words of thankfulness, and left the room. He had ordered one of the royal carriages to convey me, and his aide-de-camp to go with me to Berlin. When we were seated in the railway carriage, the aide-de-camp said, 'How long have you known the king?' I replied, 'This was my first introduction to him.' 'Your first!' he exclaimed; 'why, the king received you and treated you as a friend, and I thought you had known him a long time.' I replied again that I was all astonishment and gratitude. After some very pleasing conversation about the king's habits and general kindness, we arrived at the hotel about eleven o'clock. This, of course, was one of the most gratifying

days of my life; not merely the sight and presence of royalty, (though that I would not undervalue,) but the conversation—the children—the beauties of nature and art —the interests of Zion first in the mind of one of such vast influence;—all gave an interest to the scene which it is impossible to describe. May I preach the better for it, love a Master who has been so kind to me, pray for a sovereign who has so condescended to me, and serve a people who must ever stand foremost in my best affections! I have perhaps wearied you with this long epistle. Read as much of it as you think fit to my friends, the elders, and make any statement of it you like to the people. I should not like any portion of it to get to the press; in your hands I know it is safe.—With every sentiment of Christian love, I am, my dear friend, yours in Christ,

"J. S."

This introduction to the king led to further intercourse during the visit of the Evangelical Alliance to Berlin in 1857.

The following memoranda of it are preserved amongst Mr Sherman's papers:—

"Our little party, consisting of my daughter, a friend, and myself, arrived late on the evening of Tuesday at the Hotel d'Angleterre, Berlin, and were much distressed to find that we had not shared the pleasures of a public reception which his Majesty and the queen had given that afternoon to all the members of the Evangelical Alliance. Providentially, we made no arrangements for the following days, except for such attendances as we could give at the meetings of the Evangelical Alliance.

"His Majesty might have seen my name among the new arrivals at the hotel. However this may be, on Tuesday morning he sent a messenger to the hotel, commanding my attendance at the palace by one o'clock that day. I attended accordingly. A military officer received me and announced me to his Majesty, who was then in another apartment. Very soon his Majesty appeared, and walking across the room to welcome me, took my hand in both his, saying, 'Oh, my dear Sherman, how I have longed to see you; come into my library.' His Majesty commenced by referring to a note of condolence I had some time before sent him. 'Your letter almost broke my heart; when I began to recollect so many saints removed to glory since we last met at Charlottenhof,—my dear brother, whom you met at Buchwald—dear Prince Waldemar, whom I made a general the day you dined with me—and that most precious child of God, the Countess of Reden—and, last of all, your dear wife. What a gap death has made in the circle of my most precious relations and friends! But they are all gone, I believe, to a heavenly world, where it may not be long ere we, through the love and grace of our Redeemer, shall join them.' He then entered very fully into the state of his own religious life,—the hopes and joys which he experienced of God's salvation, which seemed to be uppermost. There were only two topics which diverted his mind for a short time from that which appeared the fulness of his heart. The first was the approaching marriage between his nephew and our princess, in which he expressed the greatest felicity. The second was the meeting of the representatives of so many different sections of the Church of Christ in

Berlin. With great emotion he exclaimed, 'O my God, what am I, that I should be permitted to see and enjoy this gathering of Thy dear children on earth before I meet them in the eternal assembly! What an honour and a privilege!' Yet, as if a spring of thankfulness and holy joy were running through his whole soul, he returned again to those experimental and devotional strains in which he found the highest delight. I needed only to suggest a topic, or ask a question, and he readily took the lead in conversation.

"I had now been three quarters of an hour closeted with the king, and rising to take my departure, he said, 'I cannot now ask you to stay and dine with me, for it will be a purely military dinner at three o'clock;' but again taking my hand between both his, he assured me of his affectionate interest in me, and wished me many blessings, and begged I would never again visit Berlin without calling on him at the palace without ceremony. When I entered the carriage, the impression of the interview was inexpressibly delightful. Moreover, it could not have been granted to me without sacrifice, for he had been reviewing the troops that morning, parting with his brother-in-law, the Emperor of Russia, and no doubt transacting other official business; and therefore, to grant me an audience of three quarters of an hour, purely for the sake of conversation on heavenly things, was a mark of favour I very highly estimate.

"The king and queen were present at the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance at half-past five.

"Such was my interview with that excellent monarch, who was not ashamed, against the opinion of most of his clergy and councillors, to meet the Evangelical Alliance often

in public, and declare himself in favour of evangelical truth. Of course, when I returned to the hotel, congratulations and inquiries were presented from all quarters, and it was no small comfort to be able to bear testimony to the private effusions of his prayerful heart, as the members of the Alliance were witnesses of his public devotion to the cause of Christ."

CHAPTER X.

THE magnitude of the church at Surrey Chapel gives an interest to its organisation and agencies. A short account of these, moreover, will afford the best insight that can be given into the varied and overwhelming demands made upon its pastor; while to very many persons it will impart novel information concerning the aims and methods of Nonconforming church-life. We will take the year 1848. The public services conducted by Mr Sherman were the morning and evening Sabbath services, with the services on the Tuesday evening and Friday morning. The afternoon Sabbath service was conducted by the assistant minister. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was administered on the first Sabbath morning, and on the third Sabbath afternoon, of each month, and the ordinance of baptism at the close of the Friday morning service, once a-quarter. Prayer-meetings were held—on the Sabbath morning, at seven o'clock; on the Sabbath evening, at a quarter past eight o'clock; on the Monday evening, at seven o'clock; and on the Tuesday evening, (for teachers,) at half-past eight o'clock. Every Monday

morning, from nine to eleven o'clock, and after the Tuesday evening and Friday morning services, the pastor was in the vestry to see persons wishing for church-fellowship, or for religious conversation.

There were eight elders of the church, whose duties were "to converse with the candidates for church-fellowship; to assist the minister in the visitation of the members of the church, particularly the sick; to advise with those who may seek their counsel in times of difficulty; and, under the direction of the minister, to examine cases of defection, and exercise suitable discipline. The elders may be seen before or after the services; and they meet every Monday afternoon at five o'clock for conference and prayer, to present their report of visits paid, and to attend to such business as may be brought before them."

The deacons' office, in ordinary Congregational churches, differs from this. The deacon is not a spiritual officer of the church,—his official duty being simply the administration of the temporal affairs of the church, such as pew-rents, collections, benevolent funds, &c. The only spiritual officer of a Congregational church is the pastor, to whom all spiritual matters—such as pulpit services, Bible-classes, prayer-meetings, &c.—are entrusted. Neither of these officers is responsible to the other, but, independently and equally, both are directly responsible to the church. The connexion between pastor and deacons, therefore, is one of simple fellowship and friendly counsel; but, practically, this is most important and precious, for in a well-ordered church every matter in any way affecting its interests is considered by them in council. No wise pastor acts without the counsel

of his deacons; nor do wise deacons act without the counsel of the pastor. Deacons, moreover, are presumed to be amongst the wisest and most spiritual men of the church; they therefore afford valuable assistance to the pastor and the church in visiting the sick, conversing with religious inquirers, taking part in prayer-meetings, &c. These, however, are not official acts, and are frequently performed by other experienced members of the church.

In the church at Surrey, the elders were spiritual officers appointed, as such, to assist the pastor in certain of his spiritual functions. The admission to the fellowship of the church, for example, was determined, not by the church itself, but by the minister and elders,—the pastor simply announcing to the church the names of fresh communicants, to whom he generally addressed a few words of counsel. To each communicant a card of membership was given, to be retained by him during his fellowship. An attendance-card was also given, divided into twelve monthly parts,—the part for the current month being given to the elders at the administration of the Lord's Supper. The attendance of communicants thus indicated was entered in a book kept for the purpose, absentees being reported and visited. The theory was that each member of the church should be visited by an elder once a-year; but the magnitude of the church rendered this utterly impracticable, and it was abandoned.

In the selection of elders, Mr Sherman had regard principally to their fitness for spiritual service. On one occasion, he had fixed his eye upon an individual whom he thought likely to be useful; and on mentioning his name to one of his elders, it was suggested that as the individual in question

was a Baptist, and held very decided views, it might mar their unanimity. "I tell you what," he replied, "I should like to have an Episcopalian, a Presbyterian, a Congregationalist, a Baptist, a Wesleyan, a Moravian, and, if you please, a Plymouth Brother,—like the beautiful rainbow, their colours all merging into each other, and all deriving beauty and light from the same glorious source—the Sun of Righteousness."

Another social expedient was to hold periodical tea-meetings, to which members were invited in sections, the names being taken alphabetically; and the meetings being devoted to general conversation, or to any matters that might affect the spiritual life of the church, new life was in this way infused into the church, the social distance of its members was lessened, and its various agencies were recruited with workers.

In every large church, in a large population, it is exceedingly difficult to make church life a real communion of saints. Men are so accustomed to crowded streets and strange faces, and to the impossibility of knowing everybody, that they are contented, even in the church of Christ, with their own little circle of acquaintances. Every Sunday, too, the faces of strangers are seen in their churches and pews. Hence, it often happens that, by quiet, unintrusive persons, large churches are felt to be cold places—their only communion with fellow-members being at the table of the Lord. Hence the social devices of the watchful pastor.

The number of communicants was very large. As nearly as can be ascertained, the following is a tabular statement of them during Mr Sherman's pastorate at Surrey:—

	No. of Communicants Admitted.	Died, Dismissed, Lapsed, &c.	Total.
Number at commencement of Mr Sherman's Pastorate, Sept. 4, 1836, .	...	...	556
Number at Sept. 4, 1837, . . .	...	...	722
From Sept. 4, 1837, to Sept. 4, 1838, .	257	112	867
„ 1838, „ 1839, .	251	121	1097
„ 1839, „ 1840, .	102	...	...
„ 1840, „ 1841, .	63	...	1067
„ 1841, „ 1842, .	281	60	1288
„ 1842, „ 1843, .	154	159	1263
„ 1843, „ 1844, .	123	64	1322
„ 1844, „ 1845, .	135	81	1376
„ 1845, „ 1846, .	147	96	1437
„ 1846, „ 1847, .	136	110	1463
„ 1847, „ 1848, .	136	185	1414
„ 1848, „ 1849, .	129	166	1377
„ 1849, „ 1850, .	125	129	1373
„ 1850, „ 1851, .	78	248	1203
„ 1851, „ 1852, .	95	79	1219
„ 1852, „ 1853, .	96	114	1201
„ 1853, to July, 1854, .	62	387	876

These figures very strikingly illustrate the great and rapid fluctuations of London churches. How largely their gains are counterbalanced by losses! The large item of loss in the last line is accounted for by the fact, that the register had not been accurately kept during the year or two preceding. Indeed, it is never very easy to determine when names must be expunged from a church-list: old members, who remove to a distance, are reluctant to believe that the severance is final; domestic servants disappear, and the minister does not know it, or hopes that the church-bond may yet hold them. On assuming the pastorate, as Mr Sherman's successor, the Rev. Newman Hall very naturally subjected the register to a severe revision, and cut off all whose membership was not actual and practical

The oldest of the associations connected with Surrey Chapel was the Benevolent Society for the Relief of the Sick Poor, irrespective of their religious denomination or place of worship.

The Auxiliary to the London Missionary Society was one of the earliest formed, and in 1848 contributed £744, 2s. 3d. for the preaching of the gospel to the heathen. The principal of the annual sermons for the Society in May is always preached in Surrey Chapel.

The schools, in 1848, comprised ten Sabbath schools, and two ragged schools, in which 3590 children were taught by 380 teachers. Connected with these were nine teachers' classes.

The Dorcas Society assisted with money and clothing, at the period of their confinement, seventy poor mothers.

The Bible Association distributed 657 Bibles and 458 Testaments,—for which £50, 15s. 5d. were paid by the poor; £41, 17s. were sent in free contributions to the parent Society.

The Auxiliary to the Tract Society circulated 34,353 tracts, 8403 books, and 4400 hand-bills.

The Surrey Chapel Alms-houses afforded homes and means of support to twenty-three poor women, who, prior to their admission, must for seven years have been members of some Christian church.

The School of Industry clothed and educated thirty poor girls.

The Female Clothing Society furnished needful articles of clothing at half-price to 100 poor women, who brought tickets from subscribers.

The Christian Instruction Association visited twenty districts, containing 675 families.

The Maternal Association, having six branches connected with the different schools, held monthly and fortnightly meetings of mothers for prayer and conference.

The Young Men's Association, with its two branches, held weekly meetings.

The Auxiliary to the City Mission supported two missionaries, who visited 1315 families, paying 8619 visits, and holding 167 meetings.

The Christian Mutual Provident Society—a branch of the General Society of which Mr Sherman was the founder—had 111 members, effecting insurances for relief and medical attendance in sickness, for deferred annuities, or for the payment of sums at death.

The Centenary Fund, for erecting a memorial to mark the centenary of Rowland Hill's birth, which occurred in 1845, effected the purchase of the Temperance Hall in the Waterloo Road, and adapted it for mission uses, at a cost of £2000, calling it Hawkstone Hall; towards this, and towards the strengthening and enlarging of the existing schools, the congregation, in 1848, contributed £328, 17s. 11d.

The Jews' class, for educating the children of Jewish parents, had an average of twelve pupils.

The Cheshunt College Fund, for raising contributions for the college where Mr Sherman was educated, produced £20.

What an impression of Christian activity and usefulness all this produces! What a demand it must have made upon the heart, and brain, and hand of the directing pastor; for,

however efficient official managers might be, all must come under his general superintendence, and in turn have some portion of his services! And what an incalculable blessing such a church must be in any neighbourhood! In how many ways does it touch and minister to the sins and sorrows of our poor, wretched humanity! And Surrey Chapel, although amongst the foremost, is only one of many. Most of the large Nonconforming churches of London and the great provincial towns have similar agencies, and many of them of equal power and magnitude.

The new schoolrooms, holding about four hundred adults, were the centre and means of these varied operations. They proved, indeed, almost as useful to the work and prosperity of the church as the chapel itself. One part of the economics of the church was—that every society or organisation using the rooms was required to make a proportionate contribution toward the necessary expenses thereof; and thus, that which would otherwise have been a heavy burden upon the general funds of the church was easily provided.

CHAPTER XI.

Mr Sherman felt the excessive demands made upon him, and the utter impossibility of anything like pastoral oversight of thirteen or fourteen hundred communicants; indeed, this is the uniform experience of every pastor of a large church in a crowded population. He may commence his ministry with the best resolutions, and with the most calculated distribution of his time; but the pressure of manifold

claims proves too much for him; and, after a severe struggle, his pastoral visitations practically become restricted to the sick and the sorrowful. Nor is there any remedy for this but a plurality of pastors in all large churches.

After Mr Sherman's illness in 1847, his friends urged him to get an assistant. After some hesitancy, he invited a young minister to become his colleague; but the experiment was not successful, and, after a short time, the connexion terminated, and Mr Sherman resolved that he would submit to any labour rather than risk another experiment of the kind. Such an instance is very discouraging. If, in a church of such magnitude as that at Surrey, a plurality of pastors be practically impossible, where could it be expected to succeed? And yet it may not be concealed that this is the common experience and conclusion of senior ministers, and that the instances where a collegiate charge is long-continued, happy, and successful are comparatively few. Whether the fault be in the undue domination of the senior pastor or the undue assumption of the junior, or, as is more probable, in the simple fact of disparity of years and notions, and forms of thought and work; or whether in the foolish partisanship of churches which, as in apostolic times, will be some "of Paul," and some "of Apollos," it may be impossible to say; but it is hardly to the credit of ministerial character and grace. In other churches, the law of subjection succeeds, and rectors and curates, superintendents and subordinates, work harmoniously together. In our churches, the law of equality often fails—probably because a greater grace is demanded for the right use of freedom, than for the acceptance of inevitable law.

Mr Sherman was a man of sensitive, impulsive nature,—very affectionate, generous, and kind; but, like all men of similar temperament, somewhat hot and hasty—perhaps even imperative. His warm emotions gave great and peculiar power to his ministry, and greatly endeared him to all who came into intimate contact with him. His sensibility, however, was never permitted to hinder him from undertaking any service, however painful, which he felt to be a duty. Thus he preached a funeral sermon for his daughter Selina, who died in Silesia, and of whom he was devotedly fond, although to do this almost broke his heart; but he thought and hoped that it might be the salvation of many of the young people who had known and loved her, and to whom he addressed it. The text was John xix. 38, "A disciple of Jesus, but secretly." The sermon was published as one of a course of sermons to young people, which he was then preaching, and which were published. In like manner, he preached a sermon on the death of Mrs Sherman, from the text, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord."

The death of Mrs Sherman (1848) was the greatest trial of his life. She was, perhaps, one of the most perfect women, as a pastor's wife, that God ever gave to one of His servants. Far more was she than an affectionate and a devoted wife; she was almost as much to the church as her husband was, exercising in it a most precious spiritual influence, and shedding around her an indescribable charm of piety and grace. By her classes, she was almost worshipped; to her husband, she was a wise counsellor and a holy helper,—a helpmeet such as few men in such a position are favoured

with. Her Memoir by her husband, full of loving appreciation as it is, so far from exaggerating her manifold excellences, is thought by those who knew her, and appears to the writer —trusting to the impressions of years ago, around which a halo of admiring reverence has gathered—to fall short of them. The letters addressed to Mr Sherman on her death, which would almost fill a volume, are full of expressions of unbounded admiration and gratitude for spiritual benefits derived from her. One Friday morning, a lady heard some poor women speaking of her. "There she is," said one of them, "the dear creature; she is like Jesus Christ." "What do you mean?" said another; "I know she is very good; but why is she like Jesus Christ?" "Because," was the reply, "she never despises any one, and has always a smile and a kind word for the poor."

The details of her usefulness, illness, and death are fully given in Mr Sherman's Memoir of her, and need not be repeated here.

After two years of painful and struggling illness, she died of consumption, on the 18th of May 1848. The preparation of the Memoir was a very trying task to Mr Sherman. "I have often seen him in his study," says Mr Tyler, one of his elders and most intimate friends, "weeping excessively over letters from which he was making selections for the Memoir. I used to say to him that he really ought not to attempt it; but he would reply, 'I cannot trust it in any other hands; I must go through with it.'"

With her, the chief earthly sunshine of Mr Sherman's life departed; a sadness rested upon it ever afterwards.

Mr Sherman was not without his ecclesiastical trials at

Surrey. Every church, founded under such circumstances as that of Surrey, will necessarily involve anomalies in its practical working. Surrey Chapel does not belong to any one of the three essential forms of church-government—Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, and Congregationalism. It cannot be controlled by the absolute authority of the first,—its onliness renders the second impossible,—and it repudiates the popular self-government of the last. Its Establishment theory prevents its thorough reliance upon its members, while the absence of Establishment support makes it absolutely dependent upon them; and, practically, men will not supply funds if they have no voice in their administration. Liability to taxation implies right of representation. Invariably, therefore, it will be found that, although the impulse of original circumstances or the personal influence of a minister may for a while induce a church to acquiesce in an autocratic administration, yet sooner or later the right of popular administration will be claimed and obtained, and righteously and beneficially so; for whatever may be the incidental evils of popular church-government, the incidental evils of autocracy are greater; better the occasional tyranny of a church, than the irresponsible tyranny of a minister. Almost invariably, therefore, after a few years, such churches as Surrey become virtually Congregational churches. The popular control, for which the trust-deed may not have provided, is practically conceded in some form or other.

Mr Sherman was not free from troubles arising from this source. Up to 1847, the Lord's Supper was administered after the manner of the Church of England, the members coming to the Lord's table and receiving it in com-

panies of twenty or thirty, or as many as could kneel together. But when the church grew to a thousand members, this was found a very inconvenient and wearisome thing,—a continual stream of communicants passing to and from the communion table in the narrow aisles created very great confusion. The question was therefore mooted, whether the trust-deed permitted any option in the mode of administration; and if so, whether it would not be better, as in Congregational churches, for the elders to carry the elements from pew to pew. Mr Walker, an active member of the church, and a superintendent of one of the Sunday schools, got up a requisition to the minister and elders, and carried it round for signature amongst the members of the church, and having obtained about three hundred and fifty names, presented it to the authorities. It was discussed at the elders' meeting, and an answer was given that the matter was under consideration; as indeed it had been some months before, Mr Sherman having long thought such an alteration desirable. A little sensitive, as it would appear, about their prerogative, it was now determined by the minister and elders to wait until that which they deemed a faction should refrain from interference. Several letters passed. The leading communicants met the elders, and were informed that if they would be contented for a while, the necessary inquiries should be made, and if it could be done legally, the change should be effected. This was not deemed satisfactory, and the individual who had got up the requisition retired from the communion of the church, and several members with him, until their request should be complied with. He then published a pamphlet containing the whole correspondence, with

his comments thereupon, together with complaints of "the system of anti-scriptural government under which they were held by the trustee management." After about two years' controversy, the change was effected with the almost unanimous concurrence of the church.

The incident is instructive as an illustration of the inevitable working of church principles. In an Episcopal church, the matter would have been ruled by absolute authority; in a Presbyterian church, it would have been referred to the presbytery; in a Congregational church, it would have been at once referred to the church, and decided by the wishes of a majority of the communicants.

In 1838, Mr Sherman preached a course of sermons on "Modern Infidelity," which, fifteen years afterwards, he repeated at Blackheath.

Secularism was at that time making a great noise, and producing a considerable effect upon the working classes. Its advocates held a meeting every Sunday evening in the Rotunda in Blackfriars Road, to which people were admitted at the charge of threepence each, and where an infidel lecturer, of the name of Taylor, at that time very popular, and the notorious Mrs Martin, commonly held forth. Handbills, too, were put forth, challenging Mr Sherman and others to public discussions. These things induced Mr Sherman to preach a course of lectures on Infidelity on Sunday evenings. They were popular in character, and very successful. The audiences at the Rotunda dwindled down to seven persons, and it was shut up; and no more was heard of Mrs Martin in that neighbourhood.

The lectures were published, and form an admirable

manual of Christian evidence for the young. They make no pretension to originality—their avowed aim is to bring together the testimonies and arguments of the principal Christian apologists. "The summary of historical information here given," says Mr Sherman, "is scattered through numerous expensive volumes, not readily accessible to ordinary readers, and forms a testimony to the credibility and divinity of the Scriptures, the force of which none but a prejudiced or hardened mind could resist." These testimonies are compiled with great industry and classified with great skill, the arrangement of the lectures being as follows:—

I. The Principles of Infidelity contrasted with the Doctrines of Christianity.

II. The Difficulties of Infidelity contrasted with the Mysteries of Christianity.

III. The Experiments of Infidelity contrasted with the Success of Christianity.

IV. The Characters of Infidels contrasted with the Characters of Christians.

V. The Internal Evidences of Christianity.

VI. The External Evidences of Christianity.

VII. The Moral Qualifications necessary for Studying the Scriptures.

One of Mr Sherman's literary enterprises was the publication of a series of reprints of some of the best of the Puritan Divines. With the assistance, as amanuenses, of some members of his congregation, he prepared for the press, and published in imperial octavo, double columns—Greenhill on

Ezekiel; Manton on James; Adams on the Second Epistle of Peter; Jenkyn on Jude; Burroughs, Hall, and Reynolds on Hosea; Daillé on the Philippians, for the first time translated from the French; and a revised translation of Daillé on the Colossians.

These very valuable works, which had been almost inaccessible to readers of limited means, were published at a very low price, and were thus brought within the reach of all theological students.

A little before his death, Mr Sherman presented the plates to Mr Nichol of Edinburgh, the enterprising publisher of the "Puritan Divines," who is now re-issuing the works at a price even lower than that of their first publication.

In 1850, the Hon. and Rev. Baptist W. Noel, after many years of anxious inquiry, felt it to be his duty to secede from the Established Church. After a short time, he accepted an invitation to succeed the Rev. J. H. Evans, also a seceding clergyman, as pastor of the Nonconforming church in St John Street, Bedford Row. A recognition service was held, and, at Mr Noel's request, Mr Sherman addressed a "Charge" to him, from Col. i. 28, 29, "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily;" which was published. It is a fervent and faithful exposition of the duties and encouragements of the Christian pastor.

Mr Sherman also, at the request of the church in Bath, of which the Rev. William Jay had been the pastor, preached, in 1854, a funeral sermon for him, from the text, Acts xi. 24,

"He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord." This sermon was also published.

In the course of his ministry at Surrey, Mr Sherman encouraged and helped many young men to prosecute studies for the ministry. When he found a young man possessing the requisite qualification of piety and talent, no lack of culture or degree of poverty was permitted to be an obstacle; education would remedy the former, and he always provided means for remedying the latter, either out of his own pocket, or from the contributions of friends specially solicited by him for the purpose. Some seven or eight young men, introduced by him to the ministry while at Surrey, were sent to Cheshunt College. Many of them were thus provided for, of whom some are now most useful servants of Christ.

CHAPTER XII.

MR SHERMAN was one of the most skilful and successful of pulpit-beggars. Give him but a good cause, and he never failed to get money. Some of his achievements in this way for missionary and other societies—and especially for the extinction of chapel debts—were worthy of Whitefield himself. His hearers could no more withhold their money than Franklin could his.

At his own Friday morning service, on one occasion, it was most bitterly cold, and very few people were present. The intensity of the cold had suggested his text, Ps. cxlvii. 17,

"Who can stand before his cold?" In the course of his remarks, he alluded to the pitiable condition of the poor immediately around the chapel; and reminded his audience, that if, in their comfortable homes, and so warmly clothed, they felt it so difficult to "stand before His cold," what must it be with the homeless and the half-naked? The appeal was so pertinent and so resistless, that a considerable contribution was offered on the spot; measures were devised for a systematic relief of the poor; the brewhouse of the parsonage was turned into a soup-kitchen; hundreds of pounds were subscribed; and for months effectual relief was afforded to thousands.

On another Friday morning—when the congregation was, as it often was, a scanty one—the subject was from the early verses of the fourth chapter of the Second Book of Kings, where Elisha multiplies the poor widow's oil to pay the demands of her creditor. He depicted the need of poor widows—especially of ministers' widows, often left utterly destitute, and mentioned a case just then known to him, where £25 were needed to apprentice a minister's son; and with such effect, that the dozen or two people present subscribed £18 before they left the chapel; more than enough to complete the sum required being sent in afterwards.

On Christmas-days he always appealed very powerfully for the poor, who had no Christmas enjoyments, urging his hearers not to sit down to their Christmas dinners without sending a portion to some poor neighbour. On one occasion, a stranger to the neighbourhood happened to be present: he was so wrought upon, that immediately after the service he went to one of the neighbouring houses, occupied,

as it happened, by members of the Surrey congregation, and asked if they knew any one in the neighbourhood to whom he could give a Christmas dinner.

When the centenary of Rowland Hill's birth was to be celebrated, various forms of celebration were resolved upon; when Mr Sherman proposed that all the children of the different schools should have a dinner of roast-beef and plum-pudding. As there were upwards of three thousand children, this was a serious undertaking. Mr Sherman, however, undertook to raise the necessary money, which he did without difficulty. The children had their dinner, and three thousand little stomachs were filled with roast-beef and plum-pudding—as only little stomachs can be.

Another instance of the practical effectiveness of his preaching is narrated by a witness of it. In one of his Monday evening lectures to teachers, the subject was the parting of Abraham and Lot; in the course of which he spoke of the magnanimity of Abraham, and, as a contrast to it, said that he had just visited a family belonging to the congregation that was rent by discord about the ownership of an old bedstead. It happened that amongst his hearers was a man who had not been in Surrey Chapel for years. He was greatly amused by the illustration; and as he left the chapel, called upon an old friend, and told him that he was at the very time arranging the distribution of some property left by a relative, amongst which there was a bedstead, which had been matter of dispute; but the effect of the address upon him was such that the bedstead difficulty was soon amicably settled.

Mr Sherman himself was a man of great benevolence.

Not only was he indefatigable in inducing others to give, but he gave liberally himself. "His house," says Mr Benn, —the precentor at Surrey from the commencement of Mr Sherman's ministry there,—"was like the house of the relieving officer, often besieged by needy applicants, and a deserving case was never sent unhelped away. The old people in the alms-houses were the objects of his special interest; he would often gladden their hearts by little parcels of tea and sugar, or by small presents of money, and never failed to remember them in his Christmas gifts." Benn, who is a tailor, narrates an incident illustrative of the quiet and effectual ways of Mr Sherman's beneficence. A young man one day brought to his shop a suit of clothes to be altered. The clothes were very good ones, but the bad fit rendered it necessary that they should be almost re-made. When the work was done, Benn was referred to Mr Sherman for payment. The young man was a minister's son, who had fallen into dissipated and profligate habits. Mr Sherman had got hold of him, and determined to make an effort to save him. The first thing was to clothe him respectably, which he did with a suit of his own clothes; the next to get him some employment, and to induce him to break off his old habits and associations,—in both of which he was successful, and had the unspeakable satisfaction of saving the young man from ruin.

Many persons will remember a young North American Indian, who was for some years a resident in Mr Sherman's house; his name was Nikkanochee, or, as some persons called him, Oceola. The Seminole Indians had received from the Government of the United States an intimation to quit the

hunting-grounds of their forefathers, and to migrate into the Far West. They refused to do so; an expedition was sent against them; the Seminoles were slaughtered, and Oceola, their leader, was carried prisoner to New York, where he died. Nikkanochee, his son, or nephew, then little more than a child, was found hidden amongst the corn near the field of slaughter. A gentleman kindly rescued him, and brought him to England. When Mr and Mrs Sherman heard his sad story, they expressed a wish to take charge of him, and to give him a Christian education. Their wish was complied with; he was taken into their house, treated by them as a son, and taught to call them father and mother. When he had finished his education, and was old enough, he wished to become a sailor; and a situation in a merchant vessel was accordingly obtained for him, a good outfit given him, and he started life with the blessing of a good man on his head, and the memory of his goodness in his heart.

The later years of Mr Sherman's ministry at Surrey, and indeed of his life, were sorely disquieted by difficulties into which he was brought by an unhappy investment which he made. About the year 1845, he permitted himself to take shares in a mining company then forming; and with characteristic ardour and sanguineness induced his father-in-law and many of his most intimate personal friends to do the same. More inexcusably, too, he permitted his name and influence to be used in connexion with it, whereby others were induced to follow his example. Like many other mining projects, it proved a gigantic swindle, and involved all the shareholders in ruinous and indefinite liabilities.

From that period to the day of his death, it involved Mr Sherman in the greatest embarrassments, and was to him a prolific source of the greatest anxieties and the bitterest regrets.

Singularly enough, it was only within half-an-hour of his death that, on consideration of the payment of a large sum of money, he was personally freed from liability, by an adjudication of the Master of the Rolls. This he never knew. The peculiar character of the affair, the number of personal friends involved in it—some of them losing their all—and the prominence which, as a matter of course, was given to his name, and which he unhappily did not seek to prevent until the bubble burst, naturally brought upon him many severe animadversions. Conscious of his rectitude, however much he might have lacked discretion, he at once called together the trustees and elders of the chapel, some of them men of high commercial standing, to whom he submitted his cheque-book and vouchers, and all the papers that could throw light upon his part in the transaction; and after a careful investigation, they unanimously passed the following resolutions, completely vindicating him from every aspersion upon his probity and honour, and expressing their sympathy with him in the great difficulties in which he so unexpectedly found himself involved:—

"At a Meeting of the Trustees and Elders of Surrey Chapel, held at No. 3 Basinghall Street on the 8th February 1849: Present—George Downing, Esq., in the chair; also Messrs Stone, Cabell, Smith, Joy, Blades, Harris, Jones, Churchill, Sells, Freeman, Tyler, and Hadland:—

"Mr Smith explained to the meeting the nature and extent of the transactions of the Rev. James Sherman with the Cameron Mining Company, and also the extent of his losses, present and prospective. He considered that Mr Sherman had been misled by the gross official misstatements which had been made to him, and referred to various facts and documents to shew that the shares in the Company were purchased as a *bonâ fide* investment, and not for the purposes of speculation or traffic. Mr Smith also gave such information in reply to the inquiries made by the friends present, in reference to current reports, as to the meeting appeared quite satisfactory. It was then resolved unanimously—

"'That the friends now present having maturely considered the information received from Mr Smith, as the solicitor of Mr Sherman, in reference to all the matters connected with his transactions with the Cameron Mining Company, come to the unanimous conclusion, that in those transactions no act whatever was done by Mr Sherman by which his moral character or ministerial reputation have been compromised; on the contrary, they believe that he has been grossly deceived by the official authorities connected with the Company as to its real condition, through which he has already sustained heavy pecuniary losses

"'That this meeting, while they regret that Mr Sherman permitted his name to appear in connexion with the Company, deeply sympathise with their esteemed friend in his present trials, and sincerely trust that the time is not far distant when, by the interposition of an all-wise and gracious Providence, he will be relieved from the difficult and painful

position in which he has been placed by the acts of artful and designing men.'

"Signed, on behalf of the meeting,

"GEORGE DOWNING, *Chairman.*"

So much was said then, and so much has been said since, about this painful matter,—and even Christian brethren have mentioned it with so many ominous shakes of the head,—that the writer has felt it to be his duty to make inquiries concerning it in every quarter where light could be thrown upon it. And as the result, he is convinced that Mr Sherman made the investment in all good faith, thinking thereby to make a better provision for his children. The proof is, that he induced so many of his relatives and friends to imitate his example. So far he is unquestionably free from blame. But so much cannot be said concerning the use that he permitted to be made of his name, and the active part that he afterwards took in the concern. We may not withhold the expression of our regret that, as a minister of religion, he should have permitted his name or his energies to be employed in any commercial enterprise whatever. Holy and consecrated to his work—as above most men Mr Sherman was—he surely in this forgot that it was "not meet in him to leave the word of God and serve tables;" that "he that warreth entangleth not himself with the things of this world." He learned the lesson by a very wholesome, although a very bitter experience. He felt most profoundly the humiliation of the disabling sorrow and care which this matter brought upon him, and the injury which it was calculated to do to his ministry; and he always spoke of

it with the earnest warnings and deep feeling that experience gives. Let no one speak of this one mistake and failing of a good man, who does not know his bitter regret as well.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE general efficiency of Mr Sherman's ministry while he was at Surrey was very great;—rarely has it been surpassed in the history of the English pulpit. He was in the meridian of his days. The excitement of the then largest congregation in London, pressing and crowding every nook of the spacious edifice, and closing in upon the preacher as he ascended the pulpit stairs, until the door of it was pressed with a buttress of living, eager men, aided his natural fervour, and he frequently swayed the feelings of the mighty mass as the wind bends the standing corn. The contagion of crowds aided the effect, and it was by no means a rare thing to see hundreds in tears together. All who were in the habit of hearing Mr Sherman at Surrey, agree in their testimony to this. "His sermons and addresses," says one of his hearers, "were greatly blessed to my drowsy soul, by the driving away of much scepticism, and the awakening of much faith, and love, and zeal."

"Although," says another, speaking of his occasional services at Surrey during Mr Hill's lifetime,—"although these sermons were preached nearly forty years ago, my recollections of them are most vivid, and the impressions produced by them remain with me to this day. It would delight me much to hear them delivered again by the same lips, and in

the mild, persuasive manner in which they dropped upon my youthful ear. Numbers, I believe, were equally blessed with myself in hearing these discourses; they found their way readily to the heart; they evidently described the personal experience of the preacher, and were well calculated to quicken, guide, and console the souls of the hearers. No one was a greater favourite, no preacher more beloved, as an occasional supply, than he. Jay, Sibree, Elliott, James, as they came year by year, drew strangers from a distance; but the congregations were never larger, nor was greater attention manifested, than when this loving man of God preached. It was no wonder, therefore, that when, after Mr Hill's decease, the trustees, with whom the choice of a pastor is vested, invited Mr Sherman, without success, the people were greatly disappointed; for his talents, experience, affectionate manner, popularity, and great success at Reading, all strengthened the desire to secure him as a pastor. It gave a corresponding satisfaction, therefore, when it was known that the trustees, backed by a memorial from the people, had a second time invited Mr Sherman to accept the pastorate; and the greatest joy prevailed when it was known that, after much deliberation and prayer, he had acceded to the request.

"I distinctly remember the morning when, with trembling steps, he ascended the pulpit to preach his first sermon as pastor. His servant Hopwood followed him, and fastened the pulpit door; and it is remarkable that this faithful attendant died on the morning of the very Sabbath upon which Mr Sherman—seventeen and a-half years after—preached his farewell sermon at Surrey. I continued to be a constant

hearer of Mr Sherman from the commencement to the close of his ministry at Surrey. His Sunday morning sermons were well calculated to build up believers in their most holy faith. He seemed to be fully convinced that, to be successful as a minister, he must excel in the pulpit. His Sunday evening sermons were generally addressed to the unconverted, and were at times most powerful and touching discourses. I sometimes thought them too long, and their appeals and exhortations too diffuse; but they evidently came from a heart longing for the glory of God, and that Christ should be accepted as a Saviour.

"On any extraordinary occasion, he seemed always equal to the demand made upon him. He watched events which might be improved for the accomplishment of the ends of his ministry. He preached annually to teachers, and often with great power; occasionally to children—often to the young. He was a most comforting preacher to the afflicted, and generally put in a word to backsliding souls. Filled, as he seemed to be, with the Spirit of God, his words often fell as the rain upon the newly-mown grass, both abundant and refreshing. His popularity, both at home and abroad, continued through the whole of his ministry at Surrey. But during the last three or four years, the writer missed somewhat of the pathos and the power of his earlier ministry; the fault was probably in himself, although he fancied that the feeling prevailed in other minds. But no one who knew Mr Sherman could help feeling that 'he was a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.'"

"I would," writes another of his Surrey flock, "add my testimony to his constant love and faithfulness. He was

much beloved by us, and deservedly so. He was the means of my own conversion to God, and of that of my two sisters. He ever proved a father to us. He was with us in sorrow and in joy;—at my father's funeral, and at my sister's marriage. He wept and he rejoiced with us. He never was happier than when surrounded by young people. Many happy evenings have we spent with him. After the death of his beloved wife, we were privileged to have his instructions in a Bible-class; and the lessons there learnt can never be forgotten."

"One of the secrets of Mr Sherman's success as a preacher," says another of his hearers, "was the studied simplicity of his style, the evangelical fulness of his sermons, and his homely and forcible illustrations. 'The glory of the gospel,' he would say, 'is its simplicity. We never think of painting gold or diamonds.' While he fully appreciated the value of literary art, he feared that some thought 'more of the polish than of the material.' One Sunday morning, I remember, a learned doctor preached a very eloquent sermon, of which Mr Sherman was a hearer. I was in the vestry with Mr Sherman after the service, when the doctor came in from the pulpit. Mr Sherman said, 'Well, doctor, do you call this preaching the gospel?' The doctor hesitated, and replied, 'Well, I am sure I took a great deal of pains in the composition of my sermon.' 'I don't doubt it,' Mr Sherman replied; 'but suppose, doctor, that a poor hungry soul had come into Surrey this morning, do you think there would have been anything for him to feed upon? Take my advice: whenever you have such an opportunity as you had this morning, preach Christ and the plenitude of His grace. I

suppose you had not fewer than two thousand hearers; what an opportunity of proclaiming the great salvation!'

"Simplicity of expression was a great object of his solicitude, in examining the themes of the young men written for his inspection. He always ran his pen through Latinised words when Saxon synonyms could be found. Such a word as 'commencement,' for instance, he would erase, and say, 'Why not say "beginning?"—every child would understand that.' For 'termination,' again, he would substitute 'end.' And after having thus, as some of them thought, spoilt the theme, he would say, 'Now read it, and see how much more plain and forcible it is.'

"John Williams translated Mr Sherman's 'Acquaintance with God' into Tahitian, and said that 'it was the easiest book he ever translated.'"

But the great secret of all was the devoutness of his spirit, the closeness of his communion with God, and his earnest, humble searching of heart.

"I resolve," says he, on a scrap of paper which lies before me, dated "Feb. 20, 1841, Saturday evening"—

"1. To rise at seven o'clock every morning, and, if possible, to retire by eleven at night.

"2. To spend half an hour with God before breakfast in reading the Scriptures and prayer.

"3. To pursue the reading of the Calendar [which he had published] and never to omit it.

"4. To select some portion out of one of the chapters for meditation through the day.

"5. To retire some time during the day for prayer, and to give as much time as possible in the evening to this exercise.

"6. To seek opportunities for prayer with my dear wife, whose perseverance and piety make me blush and rejoice. Oh, the value of such a wife!

"7. To avoid as much as possible being out in the evening.

"8. To seek by special prayer and correspondence more and more the salvation of my children.

"9. Not to go where temptations to any of my besetting sins are sure to abound.

"10. To plead with God for more conversions amongst the people, and that He would take away the impediments to my success.

"11. To visit them when opportunity offers.

"12. To labour at my sermons more and more for the profit of my people. Oh, how wonderful that the people will come and hear me! but they know not what I know, and what God knows, concerning me.

"O Lord, strengthen me—help me to put these resolves into practice, and never to depart from them. Now help me to plead for grace to perform my vows. Oh, kiss the prodigal, and welcome him to his Father's heart."

Another fragment, bearing the same date, is as follows:—

"I determine, by the grace of God assisting me, to live more to His glory than I am sure I have done for some years past. My heart reproaches me for the past—guilt lies heavy on my conscience—my ministry has been impeded by my infirmities, and, in many cases, wilful transgressions. God has, in consequence, partly withdrawn from my soul the

light of His countenance, which renders the precious privilege of private prayer of little benefit to me. Have I not great reason to fear that, after all, I am but a hypocrite, and, if so, lost? How severe have I been in the pulpit against the sins of others—how indulgent to my own! Alas, O God, the review is very bitter! Forty-five years have closed upon me this night, and the last ten have been filled with constant defects and transgressions. Many have applauded me; but I have been conscious of such appalling evils within as justly made me tremble, whether, 'having preached to others, I myself may not be a castaway.' O God, my Saviour, forbid it! O gracious Lord, who pitied backsliding Peter, pity me! Wash my sinful soul in atoning blood, and with cords of love draw me to Thyself. Do I not love Thee? Surely it cannot be a delusion; yet how much it is like it! Oh, this sin of seeking to please myself and others rather than Thee! I am sure that amongst the meanest of my flock there is more true piety than in my heart. It cuts me to the quick to think so; yet, Lord, Thou knowest that I feel it. 'I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant, O Lord.' My heart, I trust, is willing to come back; oh, if I deceive myself, make it so! Break the stone. Put any yoke upon my neck that may tame and subdue it. Only abandon me not, O Lord. Consider and hear me, lest I sleep the sleep of death. Awake, O Lord, to my help. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

In 1857, Mr Sherman was appointed a trustee of the chapels of the Countess of Huntingdon, and continued to be such until his death.

The following letters are selected from his correspondence during his pastorate at Surrey:—

TO HIS DAUGHTER SELINA.

"SURREY PARSONAGE, *March* 2, 1838.

"MY DEAR SELINA,—Although very fatigued, having travelled amid mountains of snow and manifold dangers since last Sabbath, and having not long been home after a journey of two hundred miles without stopping, except to change horses and take our meals, yet I cannot refrain from fulfilling my promise to send you a line on your birthday. And what sort of a line shall it be? Of congratulation? Yes, I praise God on your behalf that He has preserved you till now, and given you manifold mercies, mercies of which at times I believe you feel sensible. Yours has been hitherto a life of few trials, though you have had more than many of your age, and more than I fondly hoped you would ever have to endure; yet they have been few in comparison of many sins you have committed, and of many who have been greater sufferers than yourself. And I do trust, my dear girl, God enables you at times, amidst the buoyancy of spirits with which you are favoured, to see these mercies in disguise, and sent for some blessed purpose to your soul. When God speaks in the rod, it becomes us to listen. Hearken, my dear, to His present dispensation. Give your mind leave to-morrow to investigate God's gracious intentions towards you, and I doubt not you will arrive at the conclusion that He who has been your parent's God has some special kindness to you. It was at your age the Lord enabled me in earnest to seek His face; and though I have much to mourn over in a

heart which has given Him innumerable causes of provocation, I never regret having sought and found Him. He has been to me a friend and portion. His ways have been pleasantness and peace. And it was in affliction I sought Him, not of body, but of grievous oppression. He heard my weak prayer, accepted my attempts to love, and increased my knowledge of Himself and His truth. How joyful a birthday, how sanctified an affliction, it from this trial you in faith cried, 'My Father, thou art the guide of my youth.' Make the experiment. Yield yourself to God. Aim to love Him. He does not break a bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. Then shall I rejoice over you as doubly given to me in the flesh and in the Lord. Dear mamma would have sent you a present as a testimony of her love; but she prefers waiting to see you, that she may not only give you what may be useful, but that which you prefer. I send my love to you, and my prayers for you that you may be the Lord's; and with love to Mary, I am, my dear Lina, your affectionate father, "J. SHERMAN."

TO THE SAME.

"*January* 29, 1839.

"MY VERY DEAR CHILD,—We were much gratified to learn by your letter that you were well and happy. It seems a long time since we saw you, and still longer till we see you; but I trust we shall all meet in peace in June next, to bless God for all His mercies to us and you. My health is not good, occasioned by the incessant labours of the last three months, which would have destroyed all but a teetotaller. But God has been very gracious to me, and enabled me to

execute far more than I could have anticipated. Above one hundred and thirty joined the church the last two months, and between twenty and thirty are to be united this. Several young persons have been great trophies of the victorious power of the gospel, among whom was Mrs K.'s son. 'Never,' said she to me, 'was that passage more beautifully illustrated than in him, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." Before, we dreaded to hear his footsteps at the door, because his disobedience and infidelity were our grief: now every one in the house longs for the time of his coming home.' Young persons have joined the church who could say very little, but have given most satisfactory proof of their love to Christ. Mamma's classes go on delightfully. She is indeed a wonder; every grace seems to shine in her. Oh that I could catch her spirit, and that you may also!

"As this is the thirteenth letter I have written this morning, you will know that I have not had much time to spare. My best love be with you.—I am your affectionate father,

"J. SHERMAN."

TO THE SAME.

"ENFIELD, *March* 2, 1842.

"MY DEAR SELINA,—I welcome the return of your natal day with inward feelings of hope and joy. May it be to you the best you have yet seen, and afford you the surest proofs of the favour and blessing of God! The accompanying present will, I trust, be acceptable and pleasing to you, and remain with you as a token of my unfailing affection and earnest desire that you should have all reasonable gratifica-

tion within my power to grant. It is not among my smallest pleasures to be able to record that I have observed during the past year a considerable improvement in your disposition, which, though always pleasing, had some peculiarities which a little care and attention have partially amended, and will eventually, I trust, radically cure. Still, 'one thing is needful' to fit you for a happy life on earth, and eternal joys in a better state. On the morning that you were born, I consecrated you to the Saviour, and earnestly entreated that whatever your future destiny might be, He would grant you a place amongst His daughters; and cold and feeble as my prayers are, my constant entreaty still is, that you may adorn His Church like a polished pillar in His temple. Let the returning memorial of your birth bring with it recollections of your mercies and privileges, your opportunities and responsibilities. Make it a day of consecration to God. Let it be a period of peculiar, anxious inquiry into your real condition. With the general doctrines of divine truth you are familiar, and with the claims which the dear Redeemer has upon you for the remnant of your days, so that I need not urge them; yet let me say that, raised as you have been from the gates of death to comparatively comfortable health, and arriving at a period of life in which, if impressions are slighted, they seldom return, there seems greater emphasis given to the apostle's language by the circumstances of your history: 'Now is the accepted time, to-day is the day of salvation.' My prayer for you shall be, not only that you may be your parent's joy, but a blessing to the Church of Christ.—With the warmest affection, I am, my dear child, your devoted father,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

TO W. MACKRELL, ESQ.

"HOTEL ROYAL, MILAN, *Aug.* 19, 1851.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—As you said you would like to hear from me when I reached the top of Mont Blanc, though I cannot comply with your desires, the ink being frozen at that elevation, I think you will forgive me if I send you a line now I am beyond its rigid influence. I have seen it this morning from the top of Milan Cathedral, and more distinctly Monta Rosa, in all its glorious beauty. The man who has a telescope on the top of the cathedral told me that there had been no view so free of haze for these three months as that we had this morning, so that we were highly favoured; and, indeed, it was worth coming to Milan simply to view those glorious Alps. The cathedral itself surpasses every other I have seen, and is, I presume, altogether unique. It is built of pure marble, with countless spires, each spire having a statue on its pinnacle. There are a tower and spire in the centre, with ornamental work of the most elaborate description. There are above three thousand statues, every one of which is examined by a committee, and pronounced a work of art before it is allowed to be fixed. The first artists in the world, in their several generations, have been employed upon them. The whole exterior gives you an extraordinary sensation of admiration and wonder. You feel lost in the wealth of sculpture which everywhere presents itself. Nothing common offends the eye. The edges of the marble in this climate preserve a singular sharpness, and the continual repairs sustain the parts which time has worn, while those at present unfinished are being completed.

In the interior, when the eye gets accustomed to 'the dim religious light,' and especially when the sun shines strongly on the painted glass, all is beauty. I could state many things which I, an amateur, think are imperfect and out of place, but taken as a whole it is a singularly noble design, with a nave of great dignity, and an altar-piece of beautiful proportion and vast riches. The ceiling appears to be open work of stone, something like our Henry VII. Chapel at Westminster; but I understand it is only fresco-painting. The eye, however, is so completely deceived, that it was difficult for one of the vergers of the cathedral to convince me of my mistake.

"The tomb of Boromeo is, I suppose, the richest in the world, or was; but the poor saint, though cased in crystal and embalmed, shews a horrid death's head. The jewels about his crown and sceptre, &c., and a cross of emeralds and diamonds and rubies, would, I thought, look better on a living subject. The crystal, in such amazing clear and large pieces, must be above price. The poor priest who shews it puts on his sacerdotal habiliments for the purpose, lights a number of candles, and walks before you with a huge wax candle as big as my wrist. The outer case, composed entirely of silver, is let down by machinery, and then the crystal casket or coffin is seen. The room which contains it is filled with large medallions of chased solid silver, exhibiting the principal events in the saint's life. Altogether it is the most gorgeous thing of the kind I have seen. But, oh, the state of the people, when 4000 priests and 20,000 soldiers are obliged to be there! Everything seems ready for a volcanic eruption. Ignorant, prejudiced, and priest-ridden, the

kind people know nothing of liberty, and the government determine, as far as military power goes, they shall not have more than they possess. Almost all the nobles and wealthy inhabitants have, since the revolution, emigrated, or rather are obliged to live in a foreign country, because they took part in it. Thank God for England, and its civil and religious liberty! Let us emulate the men who died and suffered for the latter to secure the former. Peace be with you and all your family. I am quite well, except the chest, which does not improve much.—I am, yours affectionately,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

TO HIS DAUGHTER MARY.

"VENICE, *August* 22, 1851.

"MY DEAR MARY,—Here, at last, I have arrived in this city of the sea. Certainly it is one of the most interesting and marvellous that can well be conceived. Not the less so for turning many of my old notions of Venice upside down. What it must have been when mistress of the seas, and when, with despotic sway, for fourteen centuries, whom it would it slew, and whom it could it kept alive, it is hardly possible to conceive, but the indications of magnificence and costly splendour everywhere surround you. The eye is wearied by seeing palace after palace, once inhabited by some Doge or illustrious family, with the most elaborate carvings, statues, and frescoes. Riches must have flowed in here like a torrent. It wanted, however, the true element of social greatness to sustain its civil and religious freedom; and it wants it still and therefore cannot rise. Yet it is wonderful that a republic could exist in the midst of monarchies for so long a

period. Yesterday, we came from Verona, a very ancient town, exhibiting fallen greatness in almost every house as well as street. The chief object of interest is the amphitheatre, more perfect than any in existence; built about 102, contemporary with the Coliseum at Rome. As I sat on the granite slabs, I could not help contemplating how many precious Christians had been given to the lions there. We entered the den where the beasts were kept, and traversed part of the way where they came out into the arena. Oh, what a mercy to live in better times, and to have these monuments still existing to the faith and love of the disciples of Christ! On entering Venice, you cross, on arches, a lagoon above two miles and a-half long; that is, you ride through the midst of the sea to the grand canal at Venice, where, on landing, a large boat, gondola fashion, had painted on it *Omnitus*. We entered it, and two men as rowers, standing, soon took us to our hotel—a magnificent old palace. But, alas, the costume is gone—no ladies with cocked hat and powdered hair—no black dress over the head, with a short veil in front—no gay gondolas, trimmed with the richest silks for coverings—no servants burdened with gold lace and liveries; even the common women have declined the costume, and taken to cotton gowns, and a black lace veil thrown over the head when they can afford it. The women are anything but beautiful. We hired a gondola, which, by government order, is painted black, and exactly like a new hearse that you would think was going to some cemetery. It is so painted because the Venetians spent so much on their gondolas that their fraternal friends prohibited any other colour. Yet is Venice a glorious place,—unique, romantic, histori-

cally associated, and exhibiting to every mind that loves liberty, the necessity of cherishing it at any sacrifice. I saw St Mark's yesterday.

At present I do not think my chest much better; otherwise I am very well. Sometimes my heart sinks at the sight of these poor ignorant people—with priests and soldiers enough to destroy religion if they had any. Oh that God would arise and destroy the man of sin, whose awful power Christians must come to such cities as this to understand!

* * * * *

—Ever affectionately yours,

"J. SHERMAN."

TO J. MELLOR, ESQ.

"SURREY PARSONAGE, *Nov.* 14, 1852.

"DEAR SIR,—It must be gratifying to you to hear that your daughter's first effort in an important class of females who are well trained, and therefore capable of judging, has been so successful. I have only one word of thankfulness from them, in which I am sure you will join, that God has given you a daughter capable of imparting sound instruction to such persons, and training them for usefulness, happiness, and eternal life; and that you spare her for such an object. I am sure it will be no grief of heart to you by and by if she should be made the honoured instrument of turning many to righteousness, and conducting them to immortality and celestial glory. The highest honour of a parent is not only to have his children blessed, but for them to be a blessing. Any little sacrifice he may make for such an object will be

returned unto his honour a thousand-fold.—With great respect, I am, dear sir, yours faithfully,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

TO JOHN HALL, ESQ., ULCEBY, LINCOLNSHIRE.

"SURREY PARSONAGE, *Aug.* 4, 1853.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—The precious book of God demands our love. Happy the man who esteems it above his 'necessary food!' This country owes much to the printing and circulation of the Bible. The Reformation in England was brought about mainly by the Bible, and as its principles are understood and embraced, prosperity will flow into our beloved country. Gifts like that which I have just received from you to publish Bibles, and give them away to the poor, have a tendency above what we can calculate to bless our land. May God return to you his benediction for your devotedness to His book! When I receive the other note, I will do the best I can to distribute the books it will purchase.—With kindest regards, I am, yours affectionately,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

TO JOHN FINCH, ESQ., TUNBRIDGE WELLS.

"SURREY PARSONAGE, *January* 20, 1854.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Accept my thanks for your third donation on behalf of a student at Cheshunt. I have sent it to Mr Bramall, who will send you a receipt.

"I am much obliged for your inquiry. To be well and happy 'in the Master's work' is a great mercy. Happiness very much tends to our being well,—God has favoured me with a large portion of both. Considering I

have been a preacher thirty-eight years, and, out of that period, for thirty years have preached seven times a-week, it is not a matter of surprise that I should shake a little at times; but, on the whole, my health is remarkably good, though the labour is more than I can well manage. It seemed providential that the good people at Blackheath should think of me at a time when I began to think of retiring before infirmity had diminished the congregation. I go there in hope that, in the declining portion of life, I may do some good, and honour a Master who all my life has honoured and blessed me.—With kind regards, I am, my dear sir, yours affectionately,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

TO A GENTLEMAN, A MEMBER OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, WHO HAD ASKED IF HE MIGHT OCCASIONALLY COMMUNICATE AT SURREY CHAPEL.

"*Sunday Night, half-past* 11.

"MY DEAR SIR,—You have had long patience with me, not to be offended at my apparent delay in answering your kind and welcome note. Attribute it not to want of affection or disrespect, but to the real cause—a heart and a hand full of business, which has lately weighed me down. Oh, these are great days! God is with us, blessed be His holy name! How glad should I be to see you next Lord's-day at the table of Christ! If dear Mrs B—— can come with you, so much the better. We welcome you among us as one of the little flock under the care of Christ; and it shall be my care to lead you into a wholesome pasture. It quite accords with my feelings that you should

retain membership with the Church of England, to which you are attached, and where you have found mercy. My chief desire is, not to impoverish other churches of their members, but to gain the world to Christ, and make saints of sinners. But when one of another church asks occasionally to commune with us, that person, though a member still of that church, is dear to me as a member of Christ, and welcome to His, not my table. Dear sir, pray for me! Let me share your sympathies in my great work! Oh, did you see my house sometimes, it would break your heart—sinners weeping, and saints rejoicing! Sometimes my heart cries, 'Why am I thus favoured?' Well, I must sing of grace; but who will sing of merit? I have sent you two cards of membership for *occasional* communion,—that is, as you please,—without recognising you and Mrs B—— as having left your church and come exclusively to us.

"My love in Christ be with you and your dear wife and daughter. May we meet in heaven, to sing the praises of our sweet Saviour!—I am yours to serve in Christ,

"J. SHERMAN."

TO THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION OF SURREY CHAPEL.

"SURREY PARSONAGE, *Jan.* 1, 1847.

"BELOVED FRIENDS,—'Grace, mercy, and peace be with you from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.' Ten years have rolled away since I commenced my feeble ministrations among you, and it would ill become me to be insensible of the boundless goodness of God towards us during that period. 'Times of refreshing' have been given to the church, and 'much people added to the Lord.' His

saints have been 'rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as they have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.' And, though the novelty and freshness of the ministrations have long since passed away, it is a peculiar source of joy that the congregation has not diminished, and the church is still increasing,—our schools and teachers are augmented,—the system of instruction is improved, and our educational establishment is more efficiently and usefully conducted than for many years past,—while the various institutions connected with us, though necessarily subject to fluctuations, have steadily and increasingly sustained their vigour and benefits. Many of the members of the church have been summoned home to dwell with Christ, and, after a devoted life, in their last moments have given the most unequivocal testimony of their love to Him and faith in His gospel. Their mantle has fallen upon others, who occupy their places in the church, and whose zeal for Christ and affection to His people demonstrate that they are 'followers of them who through faith and patience now inherit the promises.' Peace dwells in our borders, and prosperity in our Zion. During the whole period no root of bitterness springing up has troubled us,—no Diotrephes, loving to have the pre-eminence, has arisen,—no heresiarch has been permitted to do us much evil; and although great vigilance has been exercised, both in the admission of members and in the superintendence of the church by its devoted elders, very few instances of discipline have occurred.

"However favourably his ministrations have been received by you, none can be more sensible than himself of your pastor's defects. Yet he must be stone, if his heart did

not leap within him for very joy that the Lord Christ, his Master, should deign to make them a blessing to your souls. Oh the dignity that is put upon Him in making you vessels of honour meet for the Master's use! Oh the glorious hope, that He shall one day present you before Him as the reward of His servant's toil, and the fruit of His Spirit's work!

"The past year yielded remembrances of no ordinary kind. When domestic affliction invaded my dwelling, and sorrowful forebodings filled my heart, your tender regards, in commemorating the jubilee of my birth, and in expressing your sympathy with the sufferer, were manifested in offerings which will remain as testimonials in my study, and an heirloom in my family, as long as both exist. I was too much surprised and overcome with the unexpected gifts at the time to utter expressions of becoming gratitude; but be assured they have left an impression of your kindness which time can never efface. To see that affliction mitigated, and the dear sufferer relieved, in answer to your prayers, demands and occasions songs of thanksgiving. May He perfect that which concerns her, and grant the utmost of your requests on her behalf!

"Surely after such a review of his goodness, (and the half has not been told,) each of you will be ready to join your pastor in the grateful inquiry, 'What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits toward me?' and to determine, 'I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord; I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.' How becoming are such resolutions! If salvation is more copiously enjoyed—if prayer is more sedulously used—if obedience to Christ is more openly manifested, how much

more happy and useful will you become! Your personal piety is the great thing to be cultivated. If this prospers not, it is of little importance whatever else prospers. Your wealth may increase, but you will have it with a curse;—all men may speak well of you, but that honour you will possess with your Saviour's 'woe;'—your business may be enlarged, but if you are so careful and troubled about many things as to treat as secondary 'the one thing needful,' your activity and energy will only be rewarded with 'leanness of soul;'—you may rise in the scale of society, and gain increased influence among your fellow-men, but if that influence is not exerted for Christ, it will occasion worldly-mindedness, imitation of the habits and enjoyment of the pleasures of carnal men, and soon sink you to their level, so that they shall reflect on you with astonishment, 'Art thou also become one of us?'—you may be externally active, liberal, and sanctimonious, but if sin is indulged in the heart, and practised in the life, it will eventually 'find you out,' and either declare your hypocrisy or make bitter work for repentance.

"My earnest desire is, that this year you may pre-eminently walk with God. In order to this, let me urge upon you a diligent and prayerful perusal of the Word of God in private. Study it and meditate on it. The faith of the Bereans and their Christian nobility sprang from a correct apprehension of the truth as it is in Jesus. The ministry of the word would be far more welcome and profitable, and all the sanctuary services more precious, if you 'found the word of God and did eat it,' and it became 'the joy and rejoicing of your heart.' The person and work of the Lord Jesus—

His exceeding great and precious promises—His deep sympathy with you in all your troubles—the glories and blessings of His kingdom, and the honours conferred upon you in being His children, will be understood and enjoyed by you in proportion as you meditate in His statutes. Besides, His word dwelling richly in you will inspire prayer, increase your courage, embolden your exertions, and cause you to be fruitful in every good work. Oh, my dear people, lively, cheerful, energetic piety will give you an influence in your households which the most obdurate may resist, but will be constrained to admire and approve!

"The church, too, must reap immense advantages from the growth of your piety. Notwithstanding our outward prosperity, have we not much personally to deplore? Is religion with any of us as we desire it should be? Our privileges are very great and numerous; but how little fruit do we proportionately bear! From them to whom much is given, much is also required. Let us, therefore, each put the questions, What is my influence in the church? Is it for Christ, piety, and souls? Am I, in my place, using my influence for its purity, peace, increase, and joy? or am I but a fruitless branch, or poisonous weed? Am I like Tryphena and Tryphosa, who laboured much in the Lord? or like Demas, loving this present evil world, and thus drawing away many by my evil example? Surely, if we were all righteous before God, and walked in all His ordinances and commandments blameless, we should be 'fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners'—irresistible by the power of holiness. From this simple principle, the itinerant labours, the immense liberality,

the courageous devices to win souls, the unity, love, and cheerfulness, the benevolence to poor brethren, and the active usefulness, of the members of the primitive church sprang; and the influence of that church whose members are Christians must be felt, not in word only, but in deed and in truth.

"Although I have much cause for joy in the dear people of my charge, I cannot but lament and mourn over one evil, which certainly has not abated. I allude to a late attendance on public worship. Do you remember, beloved, that the sermon is not for worship, but for edification and conversion? The former part of the service is the communion you have with God. Who would willingly be absent at the confession of sins? Who would not respond in the Psalms of David, and listen to the dictates of Divine truth in the lessons for the day? Who would not lift up his heart in prayer for all sorts and conditions of men, and offer thanksgivings for all the blessings of this life, and for Jesus Christ, the best of all God's blessings? I think you would all be present, if ——, or ——, (you can supply the word,) did not prevent. Legitimate excuses may be made by some, such as sickness in the family; others are obliged to submit to the rule of those who employ them; and personal suffering will not allow some to remain the whole time of service. Where there are willing minds, such circumstances are their affliction, not their sin. But to see members of the church, who have voluntarily chosen this particular church and its minister, as best adapted to their advancement in piety, come to the sanctuary *habitually* late, is a great insult to God, whom they profess to worship, and must be visited with His displeasure. Some regard ought to be had to the

feelings and comfort of those worshippers who come in time; but you who enter after the service is begun rouse them from their knees, knock down their books in passing, and must have your regular seat, though it be at the top of the pew, and create a general disturbance all around you. My brethren, these things ought not to be; and be assured, you cannot expect God to honour you while you thus neglect Him. Let me earnestly and affectionately entreat you to remedy this evil. Endeavour to arrange the duties of the family accordingly. Make up your mind that you will be in time, and it will be done. That it is not impossible, you would soon find. If a sovereign were to be given you to be in the sanctuary punctually, your place would scarcely ever be vacant—no excuses would be listened to an instant for delay; the idea, 'I shall lose a sovereign if I am not in time,' would overcome every difficulty, and make you the most orderly of attendants. And if lucre would bring you, shall not love to Christ and His house, and regard for the welfare of your soul, and a suitable example for your family, equally constrain you? Oh, let your pastor behold you henceforth seeking the order of the church to which you belong, and the happiness of your fellow-worshippers.

"In connexion with this subject, I may add, that it would be a great gratification to me, and conducive to your personal advantage, as well as helpful in worship, if each would repeat the responses in the Psalms and parts of the service where they occur. Nothing has a more pleasing effect than a whole congregation of worshippers thus uniting heartily and devoutly to utter Jehovah's praises, or seek His mercy for their spirits.

"For the future, I can only add, you shall have my energies to serve you, and my prayers for your salvation. Would that I could venture to hope that you are all converted to Christ, or that you were earnestly seeking to be incorporated with the people of God. Alas! that some of you, still tied and bound with the chain of your sins, seek no emancipation from these bonds of iniquity. Surely it is time to seek the Lord. Shall all the efforts of parents, and the exhortations of the ministry, be in vain? Must the barren fig-tree, after so much husbandry and care, be cut down—cut down for cumbering the ground? O ye sons and daughters of the seed of the blessed, come with us, and we will do you good! Cast in your lot among us, and we have the authority of God to promise you peace in your pilgrimage, happiness in your conscience, and heaven when you die! It shall be no grief to you when your last hour has arrived, that having broken league with the wicked and chosen the way of God's statutes, you can see a Mediator on His throne, in whose righteousness you are clothed, welcoming you to the glories of the celestial world. Strive to realise this hour, and decide at once to be the Lord's servant.

"In conclusion, allow me to entreat you to pray for me. No minister requires prayer more than your pastor. The weight and responsibility of so large a church and congregation—the wisdom and prudence required to meet the cases of conscience constantly occurring—the influence necessary to keep all the wheels of so great a machine in operation without friction or stoppage—the piety demanded to meet the expectation of those who justly look to the shepherd for an example to the flock—the industry and activity of mind

which the preparation and delivery of so many sermons every week claim, and the health of body, spirituality, and universal devotedness the minister of such a congregation ought to have—are sufficient to urge him to entreat you, as a people that love him and seek his welfare, and your own profit by his ministry, 'Brethren, pray for me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel'—'Brethren, pray for me, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified among you;' and I shall ever remain your affectionate pastor,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

CHAPTER XIV.

DURING the months that intervened between the acceptance of Mr Sherman's resignation and his actual retirement, he was indefatigable in his solicitudes and efforts to provide for his church a successor. His heart was set upon the Rev. Newman Hall, minister of Albion Chapel, Hull. He used every argument to induce him to consent; and the generous and magnanimous spirit shewn by Mr Sherman in the negotiation is thus alluded to by Mr Hall in one of his letters in the course of it:—"We speak continually of our visit to you—your courteous hospitality—your thorough kindness—your generous feeling towards myself—your delicate avoidance of all undue influence." Happily the negotiation was successful; and, before he left, Mr Sherman had the satisfaction of knowing that he would not leave his beloved people "as sheep having no shepherd," but that they would have as his successor a servant of God, perhaps the best fitted in

the kingdom for the arduous and laborious pastorate that he was vacating.

Mr Sherman's usefulness at Surrey cannot be estimated,—moral influences can be neither measured in their force nor traced in their sequence. The ascertained and definite conversions attributable to sermons are perhaps their least results. The power of true words and earnest urgencies in sustaining spiritual life, in enlarging its sympathies and purposes, in increasing its daily sanctities, and in deepening its intensity, cannot be appréciated even by those in whom these effects are wrought; and if so with positive results produced, how much more so with evils prevented! The general influence of evangelical, intelligent, and urgent preaching, upon both the individual and collective life of a church, is perhaps the pastor's chief work and achievement; and yet, in estimating the efficiency of a ministry, how often is this altogether forgotten, or, if thought of, thrown into the estimate as an inconsiderable make-weight! And yet this is distinctively the pastor's work—to "feed the flock of Christ which He has purchased with His own blood," to "watch for their souls as one who must give account." The impulse and power thus given by Mr Sherman's ministry were very great. Whatever his success as a preacher to unconverted men, his ministry to the various needs of spiritual men was equally successful, and is spoken of with a kind of enthusiasm by those to whom he ministered. His sermons to the church were full of rich and varied experience, and wrought very powerfully upon the spiritual susceptibilities of his hearers. His own deep sympathies enabled him always to touch the right chord, and to speak the right word.

His sermons were full of that spiritual, sympathetic, urgent quality which the word "unction" the best expresses. The most spiritual of his hearers were the most delighted and edified with them.

His success as a preacher to the unconverted has in various ways been intimated. In this respect, perhaps no minister since Whitefield has surpassed him. These memoirs record two instances—one at Reading, and the other at Surrey—where about eighty persons in each place, on joining the church, attributed their conversion to God to a single sermon. How many more there were who sought church-fellowship elsewhere, or, although led to Christ, did not seek it at all, only the revelations of the other world can declare. And those were only surpassing instances. Scarcely ever did he preach but his preaching was the means of some conversions; instances of which, from almost every part of the country, were continually coming to his knowledge, and many of the subjects of which now occupy honoured positions in the Church of Christ. He was the spiritual father of many who have been and are themselves the means of spiritual life to hundreds. "At a recent social members' meeting," writes the Rev. Newman Hall to him, "one person stated that, travelling, he had met with a man who was delighted to find he was a member of Mr Sherman's church; that he, 'by chance,' went once to a chapel in Norwich, where a Mr Sherman preached from, 'To you that believe He is precious.' It was the means of his conversion. It was years ago, and he had never seen you before or since. At the same meeting, a woman also said, that one night in desperation, and to spite her husband, she came to Surrey Chapel. Your sermon that

night was her salvation. She had been a total neglecter of God; now her husband, two sons, and one daughter are members at Surrey, all through that first conversion. A woman just 'received' referred to your farewell sermon as the voice that led her to Jesus.

"I was sure," continues Mr Hall, "that you would rejoice to hear of such things. Your labours live, and God still blesses your seed. You have laboured, and I have entered into your labours. God help me to preach as faithfully, lovingly, and successfully!"

And thus, throughout his life, many "rose up to call him blessed."

Mr Sherman's health had never been very robust. Twice during his pastorate at Surrey he had been compelled to suspend his labours, and to retire to the Continent in order to recruit his strength. So seriously was it impaired in 1842, that in his letter to the trustees announcing the necessity for rest, he expressed his willingness to retire from his pastorate, if it were thought that a prolonged absence would prove injurious to the church. From the period of his apprenticeship, he suffered from tenderness of the throat and chest; his breakings down were always from this cause; and pulmonary disease occasioned his death at last. As early as the beginning of 1852, Mr Sherman contemplated the resignation of his pastorate; but was deterred from it by the affectionate solicitations of friends. Throughout the year 1853, Mr Sherman had been conscious of steadily diminishing strength; and at length, after seeking the best medical advice, he came to the conclusion that the only human hope

of avoiding a premature suspension from the ministry altogether, if not a premature death, was to retire from the overwhelming labours of Surrey Chapel, to some sphere of labour that would make less demand upon him.

A new Congregational church was just then contemplated at Blackheath; and its promoters, probably aware of the state of Mr Sherman's mind, addressed to him, on the 12th of November, a formal invitation to become its pastor. This coincidence seems to have led Mr Sherman to a decision. On every ground, Blackheath appeared to be precisely the kind of place suited to his state of health and degree of strength. It seemed a special intimation of Providence to him, and he determined to make the change. Accordingly, he informed the trustees of Surrey of the conclusion to which he had reluctantly come; when, after an interview with him, they passed resolutions, which, as they express their confidence and love in their pastor, and their high appreciation of his great usefulness, are here subjoined:—

"*November* 24, 1853.

"Resolved unanimously, That the trustees have heard with deep regret that the state of his health, and the fear of impeding the future prosperity of the Redeemer's cause at Surrey Chapel, by his inability to continue the needful services, have led their esteemed pastor to entertain the thought of retiring from his important pastorate; but they trust that, before he comes to any conclusion upon the matter, he will kindly consider the following statements, which appear to the trustees to suggest strong reasons for the continuance of his connexion with Surrey Chapel, viz.:—

"The encouraging success which, through the blessing of the Holy Spirit, has attended his ministry during the period of his pastorate for seventeen years.

"That he presides over one of the most extensive churches in the country, and fully enjoys the unabated and growing attachment and esteem of its members, trustees, and elders.

"The happy prosperity of the numerous schools and other institutions connected with Surrey Chapel, the efficiency of which has been promoted by the instructions of the pulpit and the constant and well-timed exhortations of the pastor to his people, 'to abound in the work of the Lord.'

"The extensive and deserved influence possessed by the pastor of Surrey Chapel, as such, among the churches of the country, and the religious institutions of the day.

"That looking to these important points, and others which will suggest themselves to the pastor, the trustees are fully persuaded that no step will be taken by him for terminating his connexion with Surrey Chapel without the clearest indications of the Divine will; it being borne in mind that the discontinuance of pastoral relations has frequently led to painful interruption of the peace and prosperity of many churches.

"That before the pastor terminates his connexion with Surrey Chapel, the trustees respectfully and affectionately suggest for his consideration the following points:—

"1. The entire retirement of the pastor from all pastoral and ministerial duties for twelve months, during which time the pulpit to be supplied by approved and efficient ministers; or—

"2. A residence in the neighbourhood of London, with

relief for a season from week-day services and from one of the sermons on the Sabbath; or—

"3. The appointment of a pious and devoted minister to take the duties of the pastorate in connexion with Mr Sherman; or as an assistant minister only.

"That in carrying out these suggested arrangements, or any others Mr Sherman might consider desirable, the trustees, to the full extent of their power, would render their hearty co-operation.

"That the trustees respectfully submit to their esteemed pastor, as the result of their deliberate and unanimous opinion, that until the means suggested have been tried, or such of them as might be considered desirable, the time has not arrived for terminating his connexion with an attached, liberal, and devoted people, because such means might, by the Divine blessing, lead to an improved state of health, and render such separation altogether unnecessary.

"That the trustees beg to assure their esteemed pastor that they desire humbly and perseveringly to unite with him in fervent prayer to the Great Head of the Church, 'that the wisdom which is profitable to direct' may be specially imparted to him at this important crisis, so that his final determination on the important subject submitted by him for their advice may be to the glory of God, his own continued usefulness, and the benefit of the Redeemer's Church.

"That the trustees will wait with anxiety the pastor's reply to the present resolutions, trusting that it may render it unnecessary for them to follow the advice he has kindly given of making prompt application to the Rev. Newman Hall, as an efficient successor to the pastorate of Surrey Chapel."

To these resolutions, Mr Sherman replied—

"I beg to acknowledge the receipt of a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the trustees of Surrey Chapel, and of resolutions adopted by them on Thursday, November 24, 1853.

"For the affectionate expressions toward myself, and the testimony to my labours which that document contains, I feel deeply grateful.

"To differ from you in judgment on a matter of such importance to us both is rendered the more distressing to me by such a kind testimonial.

"Painfully conscious 'that the discontinuance of pastoral relations has frequently led to fearful interruption of the peace and prosperity of many churches,' I have long hesitated to resign a sphere where God has so signally added His blessing to the labours of His servant. Such a step, I felt, required the most mature consideration and prayer for Divine guidance, and should not be the decision of a hasty judgment, which wise men could not approve. If I have failed to attain 'the wisdom profitable to direct,' it has not been the result of leaving untried any scriptural means with which I am acquainted to ascertain the will of God.

"To the chief of your arguments now presented to me in your resolutions to continue my connexion with the church at Surrey Chapel, I replied orally at our late interview. It will be, however, more respectful to you, and more satisfactory to myself, to record the reasons which weigh with my own judgment for an opposite decision.

"For a long time I have struggled against the conviction, that the labours attendant on the pastorate of Surrey Chapel

are more than I am able efficiently to perform. With advancing years, I feel less capable of undertaking the frequent public services, and general superintendence of the school, the societies, and the objects of benevolence which it has been the glory of the congregation to promote, and the duty of the pastor to encourage.

"The uniform testimony of the first medical authorities has been, that unless I abbreviated my labours, and resided in the country for greater quiet and better air, two or three years would terminate my public career. Symptoms have appeared, which, though not much affecting my general health, weaken those powers that are most essential to a successful discharge of frequent pulpit exercises in a large chapel.

"It therefore became a serious and oft-debated question whether I should seek an assistant or co-pastor, or resign my charge entirely into abler hands. In the midst of this debate with my judgment, an unexpected invitation was sent to me to undertake the pastorate of a new Congregational church now erecting at Blackheath. On this, to me, momentous change, I have endeavoured to give the most deliberate and prayerful consideration, and to obtain the advice of a few judicious ministerial brethren, who could look at the demands of both spheres of labour, and at my suitableness for either, with calmness and judgment. The result is the conviction of my medical friends, of my ministerial brethren, and of my own judgment, that, however painful the task, it is my duty to resign into your hands the office I have now, for above seventeen years, held with great pleasure to myself, and, I trust, not without advantage to the people of my charge.

"I am well aware that, in such a resignation, I lose the influence among the churches which such a hallowed spot as Surrey Chapel gives to its pastor; and Blackheath must necessarily be a very inferior position, both in numbers and importance in the Christian Church; but while I am admonished that I must decrease, if I can be doing a little good by raising up a new congregation, the Master I have served will, I trust, accept the feeble effort.

"The proposals you make that I should retire from ministerial duties for twelve months, or have a country residence, and relief for a season from week-day services and from one service on the Sabbath, or have the help of an assistant minister, I have endeavoured deliberately to weigh; but the following reasons satisfy me that the adoption of either plan would not answer the contemplated design:—

"1. With reference to retirement for twelve months in order to recruit my health, I fear that, unless there was an absolute medical prohibition of any labour, such a total cessation would injure my health more than entire rest would benefit it.

"2. Though the second proposition would be more likely to meet the case as it respects myself, I fear it would be difficult to obtain ministers who would continuously sustain the congregation at Surrey Chapel; and as this plan is only proposed to be acted upon for a season, I should have to encounter the same difficulties at its termination.

"3. As to an assistant minister or co-pastor, the only permanent and effectual mode of help, the general experience of those who have adopted the system is, that, with very rare exceptions, it does not work well. Both your experience and my own coincide with such an opinion.

"4. Such an assistant as would be required and thought qualified for Surrey Chapel, would without difficulty obtain a numerous congregation as the sole pastor elsewhere.

"5. In most cases, it is better for a minister to resign a church while in prosperity, than to stay till his infirmities reduce it in numbers and power, and leave to his successor the difficult, and often impossible, task of raising it again to its primitive glory and efficiency.

"6. Had I determined at first not to inhabit the good old parsonage, no prejudice could have been entertained by future non-residence; but as much of my pastoral influence has been obtained, though at a great sacrifice of health and comfort, by residing near the chapel, I fear, if once I left, it would be difficult to remove from the minds of the congregation, especially of its poorer members, the impression that I had deserted my post of duty. This objection would not attach to my successor.

"7. The order of the church and congregation is so improved, when compared with its condition in 1836, that a minister of experience and pulpit power would find his way greatly prepared for him. Indeed, among all the Congregational churches, I know not one whose statistics are better preserved, or where a more efficient band of officers are willing to assist in carrying out the designs of church-fellowship.

"From these and other considerations, it does not appear to me expedient, for your sake or for my own, or for the benefit of the congregation at Surrey Chapel, to adopt either of the suggestions which you present. I believe I should follow the indications of the Divine will, as far as I can

ascertain them, in accepting the invitation sent to me from Blackheath.

"In resigning, therefore, into your hands my honourable charge, it is difficult for me to convey to you the pang it occasions. Nothing, I believe, but a stern sense of duty could induce me to leave a spot where many sorrows have visited my dwelling, where almost unprecedented success has attended my ministry, and where the sweetest friendships have been formed; and especially to resign my connexion with a loving and prayerful church, whose devotion to their pastor has known no diminution or change. The Lord bless them and keep them, and return into their bosoms a thousand-fold for all their affectionate attentions!

"May the great Head of the Church direct you to a man of God filled with the spirit of the great apostle,—determined not to know anything among men but Jesus Christ and Him crucified,—and who shall be far more successful in winning souls to the Saviour than, my dear friends, your obliged and affectionate friend and servant,

"JAMES SHERMAN.

"I am aware that by our agreement six months' notice is required from either party contemplating a change. That would expire on June 4. It might, however, facilitate arrangements for the appointment of another minister to Surrey Chapel, and be mutually agreeable, if my labours terminate in three months from this date."

The trustees were not convinced. They met again on the 12th of December, and passed resolutions reiterating their proposals and arguments; the elders, to whom Mr Sherman's

determination had been made known, now concurring with them.

Dr Maclean's very decided opinion, however, dated Dec. 13, 1853, declaring that he was "scarcely ever free from the complications of chronic bronchitis," and that "year by year" he had "observed his strength and powers of rallying after undue fatigue to have been gradually declining, and in a corresponding degree proneness to exhaustion after much exertion to have increased," and that there were "unmistakable warnings which he was clearly of opinion should not be disregarded," and that, in his opinion, neither "abbreviated services at Surrey Chapel, nor permanent assistance in his labours there," would give him "solid or satisfactory advantage," simply because "the range of Surrey Chapel was beyond his vocal powers and his now susceptible breathing organs," confirmed Mr Sherman in his decision.

He therefore wrote—

"TO THE TRUSTEES OF SURREY CHAPEL.

"SURREY PARSONAGE, *Dec.* 15, 1853.

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,—For your unanimous resolution, begging me to reconsider my determination and again consult my medical friends on the propositions you make for remaining at Surrey Chapel, I am sincerely obliged. Not only in the forms in which you suggest relief, but in every other which I was capable of devising, have I submitted my case to them. Their opinion admits of no hesitation or difference. Unanimously they advise my leaving Surrey Chapel,

and preaching in a smaller place, where the strain would be less on the organs of speaking. The bronchial affection of which I am the subject can be relieved only by continuous help. A small chapel, few services, and fresh air combined, are, they conceive, more likely than any other mode to render me fit to continue my labours for any lengthened time. It appears to me, therefore, that I should be running in opposition to every indication of Divine Providence did I not retire from my present position while it is in a state of prosperity, and leave it to a stronger and more devoted minister to carry out and enlarge the present glorious machinery of Surrey Chapel.

"I should be less than man, if I did not acutely feel parting with a church and people who have ever shewn the tenderest regards to my person and family, and who so deeply regret the step I contemplate. Similar remonstrances and entreaties were made by the church at Reading to my leaving them. Yet the prosperity which has visited Surrey for seventeen years, and the benefit Reading has gained, clearly demonstrate the change was of God. So I have no doubt it will be with my present charge, whatever may result from my future labours to others. I have too much faith in the mediatorial love of my Master not to be persuaded that He will qualify and send a minister to serve the church at Surrey Chapel, who shall far exceed their hopes.

"May He bless and guide you in this important crisis, and assist you in your prayers not to forget, my dear friends your faithful friend and affectionate servant,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

Mr Sherman's decision was then reluctantly acquiesced in, and was communicated to the church.

Various efforts, by meetings, addresses, and private entreaties, were made to induce their beloved pastor to revoke his decision; but it was not a matter that resolutions and affectionate predilections could determine. It was arranged, therefore, that Mr Sherman's pastorate should terminate in May 1854.

The farewell sermon, in which he reviewed his ministry at Surrey, was preached on April 30, from the text 2 Thess. iii. 1. On the following Sunday morning, however, he again preached, and administered the Lord's Supper to the church. His text was Rom. viii. 38, 39. It was an affecting parting. Deep and varied were the impressions produced. To more than one in the vast assembly, the last words of the beloved pastor were words of a new spiritual life.

On May 23, a valedictory meeting was held in the school-room, presided over by George Downing, Esq., one of the elders, when an address to Mr Sherman was read by William Freeman, Esq., and a silver salver and a purse of £500 were presented to him; and, amid almost overwhelming benisons and prayers, Mr Sherman took leave of his devoted people. His visits to Surrey afterwards were always occasions of great interest. The crowded chapel and beleaguered vestry attested the intensity of affection with which he was regarded.

Blackheath.

"Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."

"Lead, kindly Light, amid th' encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on;
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene—one step enough for me.

"So long Thy power has blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on;
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone,
A with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile."

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN.

"It is a favourite speculation of mine, that if spared to sixty, we then enter on the seventh decade of human life; and that this, if possible, should be turned into the Sabbath of our earthly pilgrimage, and spent sabbatically, as if on the shore of an eternal world, or in the outer courts, as it were, of the temple that is above—the tabernacle in heaven."—DR CHALMERS.

THE origin of the church at Blackheath was very simple and natural. The population had increased beyond the religious provision made for it, and it included many families of Nonconformists, for whose accommodation no Nonconforming place of worship existed. A few individuals, therefore, took counsel together, and determined upon the erection of a chapel, which, while it would furnish a congenial worship for themselves and their families, would also contribute to the religious teaching and evangelisation of the augmenting neighbourhood. A site of ground was purchased by two gentlemen—Mr Nehemiah Griffiths and Mr James Peek. The London Chapel Building Society contributed a donation of £500. Means for obtaining subscriptions were adopted, and in July 1853 the foundation-stone was laid by Mr Griffiths. In the meantime, it was felt that the success of the enterprise would very largely depend upon the minister that the few Christian workers thus associated together might be able to obtain. Towards the close of the year, their attention, in some way or other, was directed to Mr Sherman, and the result was the invitation already mentioned. When Mr Sherman had finally decided to leave Surrey, he at once replied to the overture from Blackheath, and at the end of January 1854 intimated his acceptance of it.

The chapel was opened for divine worship on the 11th of July following. The Rev. John Stoughton preached in

the morning, and the Rev. Henry Allon in the evening. On the following Sabbath morning, Mr Sherman began his pastoral work, preaching from Exod. xxxiii. 14–16, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth."

The enterprise was a new one. Not even the nucleus of a congregation or a church existed. And when on the 26th of June a meeting was held to constitute a church, only thirty persons came forward to join in Christian fellowship. After the opening of the chapel, however, success beyond the most sanguine expectations was very soon realised. The chapel rapidly filled, and before the end of the first year the accommodation was inadequate, and galleries had to be erected, increasing it to upwards of a thousand sittings. The new ones also were filled as soon as they were completed. This large congregation was rapidly consolidated. The church grew exceedingly, and at Mr Sherman's death four hundred and sixty-eight persons had been added to it. The following is a statement of its annual increase:—

From June 26 to December 31, 1854, there were added						80	persons.
„	Jan.	1	„	1855,	„	45	„
„	„	„	„	1856,	„	68	„
„	„	„	„	1857,	„	69	„
„	„	„	„	1858,	„	95	„
„	„	„	„	1859,	„	24	„
„	„	„	„	1860,	„	87	„
						468	„

All the usual agencies of Nonconforming churches—Bible classes, schools, missionary societies, &c.—were rapidly called into existence. The characteristic zeal and inventive activity of the pastor soon placed the church amongst the very foremost in liberality and Christian usefulness. In 1858, ground in the centre of the village of Lee was obtained for the erection of day-schools. These were completed in January 1860, at a cost of £700. In the following year it was determined to erect rooms for the Sabbath-school and additional vestries in connexion with the chapel. These were completed in January 1861, at a cost of £1500, and were opened by a public meeting held a few days before Mr Sherman's departure for Egypt.

In short, Mr Sherman's ministry at Blackheath was marked by the success which had characterised him through life. Neither at Reading nor at Surrey were more signal results realised, all the circumstances being taken into account.

Scarcely could another man be named who, at sixty years of age, retiring from a laborious pastorate and in enfeebled health, could thus in seven years have gathered a congregation of a thousand persons, and called into existence a church of four hundred and sixty-eight members, of wealth, power, and influence, scarcely inferior to any of the churches of Christ. His marvellous success attended him to the last—the same ministerial characteristics produced the same results. "He brought forth fruit in old age," even surpassing that of most men's prime.

In June 1859, Mr Sherman's fellow-student and life-long friend, the amiable and inestimable Rev. John Owen of Bath, died. His death greatly affected Mr Sherman; it seemed to

him premonitory of the close of his own labours. In the funeral sermon which Mr Sherman preached for his friend, and which was published, the following interesting reminiscence occurs,—an honourable testimony to both:—

"It was part of my early discipline for the ministry, after I had entered college, to be much troubled through a conscious inability to preach. Though I imagined my call to be clear and decisive, such was my mental agony, that it induced a fit of illness, and brought on a low desponding state of mind. John Owen, with a heart full of sympathy, became my friend, remonstrated with me, and applied God's promises to my fainting spirit. His room was our place of united prayer. For some time these prayer-meetings of two were kept up, and Jesus was in the midst, chasing the clouds of fear and unbelief, and restoring the joys of God's salvation, that I might teach transgressors their ways, and that sinners might be converted to Him. College life tries not only the temper, but the piety of young men. Industry in classic lore has no tendency to increase spirituality. A number of youths, with buoyant spirits, of various dispositions, of different degrees of piety, engaged in the laborious duties of systematic theology, may rub off each other's excrescences, and abate each other's vanity; but a student will find that neither the studies nor the society very much advance his spiritual interests. Strong, ardent piety must be cultivated alone with God, by prayer and meditation. In this cultivation of piety, John Owen excelled any one with whom I had the privilege of being acquainted at that time. His piety manifested itself peculiarly in the power of prayer. I remember well one Saturday afternoon, before he started for a

village twelve miles off, where he was to preach next day, that while he was engaged in prayer, his door, unperceived by him, was opened by the force of the wind, which also wafted to me his petitions. I heard—I wept—I wondered. He was wrestling with God for souls; for the power to preach; for the descent of the Holy Dove; for simplicity of utterance; and for the fulfilment of Christ's promise of assistance. If he went in the strength of that heavenly banquet for many days, I am sure I did; for the impression which that prayer produced of the privilege and power of communion with God has never left me. One thing in common with you I have lost—his prayers. 'Brother Sherman,' said he the last time I was in Bath, 'if I forget you on some occasions in prayer, on one day of the year I always plead for you, and that is on our ordination-day in November.'"

In the inscrutable providence of God, Mr Sherman's own home was to be visited by another desolating bereavement. In March 1860, after many months of fluctuating hope and fear, of painful solicitude and watching, his only unmarried daughter, Martha, died of consumption. She was in the bloom and promise of womanhood. She had just completed her twenty-first year, and in a few months was to become the wife of the Rev. Frank Soden. Her death was a bright and blessed one—she calmly fell asleep; but it blighted many hopes, and opened many wounds. His house was, indeed, left unto him desolate. His fig-tree was barked, and his vine laid waste. The stroke fell much more heavily than he himself was conscious of. "He lived in an inverted order." He shrank from the service which, when his daughter

Selina and even his wife died, he had compelled himself to discharge. The funeral sermons for her were preached by the Rev. Samuel Martin and the Rev. Henry Allon. From that time Mr Sherman's own health began to fail. A visit to the Tyrol in the summer failed to restore it; and before the close of the year it was so much impaired, that it was found necessary that he should spend the winter in a milder climate. In January 1861, therefore, accompanied by his grandson, a youth of seventeen, he left England for Malta.

He felt great solicitude for the welfare of the church during his absence. He hoped that, as on former occasions, a few months' absence would suffice for his restoration. He sought, therefore, only a temporary supply for his pulpit; and for this God mercifully provided in a way that perfectly satisfied all Mr Sherman's wishes. The Rev. J. Beazley of Sydney, Australia, had, a few months before, returned to England in impaired health, uncertain about his own future, whether it might be the will of God that, after a time, he should return to his important sphere of labour, or take a pastoral charge in England. Under these circumstances, he kindly consented to minister to the church at Blackheath during Mr Sherman's absence,—an arrangement which relieved the mind of the latter from all anxiety, and proved a very great blessing to the church; ultimately leading to Mr Beazley's settlement as Mr Sherman's successor. For nearly twelve months this arrangement continued; at the expiration of which period—all hope of Mr Sherman's recovery so as to enable him to resume the full labours of the pastorate having passed away—Mr Beazley, in August 1861, consented to become his co-pastor; arrangements for this, of the most gene-

rous and affectionate character, being proposed by Mr Sherman. Mr Sherman, however, never preached again; but under Mr Beazley's faithful and able ministry, the church has continued greatly to prosper.

Two or three letters belonging to this period of his life may close this chapter.

The following was written during the illness of his daughter:—

TO MISS HARDING.

"BRIGHTON, *Oct.* 8, 1859.

"DEAR EMMA,—I am much obliged by your sympathy. The Master sees fit to put me into vessel after vessel, and heats the fire suitably; but still the dross rises. Alas! that I have so little profited by all His discipline; yet has He patience, and renews his loving care. My dear child is no better; gradually, I think, approaching the borders of an eternal state, yet conscious of its love and grace, and satisfied with His divine will. She is the joy of the house in the midst of our sorrow. Pray for us, that peace may possess our spirits, and the joy of the Lord be our strength.

"My love in Christ be with you.—I am, yours very truly,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

The following were addressed to Mr Finch a few days before Mr Sherman left England:—

TO JOHN FINCH, ESQ.

"12 PARAGON, BLACKHEATH, 20*th Dec.* 1860.

"MY DEAR MR FINCH,—On the 4th January I expect to

leave for Malta, having been laid aside for some time by hemorrhage of the lungs. I am happy to say I am much better; and the doctors assure me I require perfect rest only to full restoration. But I am anxious to do something with my pen, if my lips are silent, and I know your kind heart will listen to my plea. You know that Mr Reynolds, formerly of Leeds, has been appointed to the theological chair at Cheshunt College, for which he seems signally qualified. God has given him great success with the students, so that we are obliged to lodge some in the village—the accommodation not being enough for twenty-seven students, our present number. More are seeking admission. To meet the demand, a piece of land has been brought into the market adjoining the college, which we were obliged to purchase, to protect the college property, on which we desire to erect a house for the resident tutor, and then we should be able to throw the whole of the old house into the college premises, so that we could accommodate more students, and render the college more efficient.

"The purchase of the land, the erection of the house, and the alteration required, we calculate would cost £2500. I want to obtain ten gentlemen to give £100 to start it. I have obtained five. Mr Mudie, Mr Cooke, Mr Remington Mills, Mr Salt, and myself, each gave £100. I trust you will be another. I am sure you will if you can. You have invariably shewn such kindness to the college, that I cannot doubt, if it be possible, you will not refrain when such a necessary and advantageous design is on foot. I do not want the money this year. I know it is a bad time to beg at the close of a year; still, it is the time when we reckon

up our mercies, as well as donations, and resolve for the future; and if the Lord my Saviour incline your heart, I shall greatly rejoice. I feel I shall not be able long to beg, or to dig; but whenever called to die, it will be more happily if I can see this noble project carried out.

"Peace and love be with you and Mrs Finch.—I am, yours faithfully, JAMES SHERMAN."

TO THE SAME.

"BLACKHEATH, *Jan.* 2, 1861.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—It is a great disappointment to me not to have seen you before my departure; but I have confidence in meeting you in heaven, where spirits who have found happiness in serving a Saviour on earth shall sing together over His victories in a world of holy joy! There seems in your note an implied intention to 'favour Cheshunt' if you can, on my return, if it please God to bring me back. At the risk of being thought troublesome, will you allow me, my dear friend, to say that the money will not be wanted till I come? I do not ask it *now;* but if you could let us have your promise for any time this year, it would greatly help our present movement, by much more than the gift itself. C—— has done us *present* harm. We shall live through it, and rise above it, but we require a few friends to cheer the young man on who has taken the lead, and is so blessed of God. So then, my dear friend, if you can, do help us this once. However, I know your conscientious devotedness, and I will say no more; but as I go through France to Marseilles, and shall not start before Monday

morning, I shall secretly hope for your benediction and promise.

"Above all, be sure I share your prayers.—I am, affectionately yours, JAMES SHERMAN."

Last Illness—Malta and Egypt.

"Thou wilt take me away with pining sickness."

"The shadow fear'd of man."

"How dull it is to pause—to make an end—
To rest unburnish'd—not to shine in use."

"At length, when sixty years and five were told,
A slow disease insensibly consumed
The powers of nature; and a few short steps
Of friends and kindred bore him from his home
To the profounder stillness of the grave.
Nor was his funeral denied the grace
Of many tears, virtuous and thoughtful grief;
Heart-sorrow render'd by sweet gratitude."

WORDSWORTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE first indication of pulmonary disease felt by Mr Sherman was an attack of hemorrhage in October 1860, the day before the autumnal meeting of Cheshunt College. It did not prevent his attendance on that occasion, but it kept him silent, and awakened great anxieties in the writer, to whom, unwilling to excite public attention, he told it in confidence. Notwithstanding tne utmost care, the hemorrhage gradually increased and his strength declined, until, a few weeks afterwards, the journey to Malta was determined upon.

Mr Sherman had visited Egypt in the winter of 1858, but then, rather for relaxation from labour and the reinvigoration of strength than from necessity. It may be interesting to contrast the impressions made upon him when in the fulness of health and hope with those made when his journey was felt to be the forlorn hope of a threatened life. On the former occasion he thus writes:—

TO THE REV. HENRY ALLON.

"GIZEH, PYRAMID OF CHEOPS, *Nov.* 13, 1858.

"MY DEAR ALLON,—Here I am. I had a dream, in which old Cheops appeared—a sad cut-throat fellow. But he assured me that he had been long expecting me to visit his sepulchre; and that a man at Islington, very gray, and somewhat older than myself, had been pestering him with

entreaties and wishes to be admitted; and that he desired me to give his kind regards, (he had not a card,) and to entreat him to come as soon as possible, and he would give him as good a reception as he gave to me. Of course, I deliver the message.

"Well, I am pleased, disappointed, and astonished at these pyramids. The way to them is fourteen miles, on a donkey—only five as the crow flies; but the Nile having overflowed its banks, you have to make a very large circuit. We took only a cup of coffee before we started—lighted our fire, boiled our water, made our coffee, cut up our fowls, boiled our eggs, and made our breakfast at the pyramid. But, oh, the horrors of that breakfast! About forty half-naked Arabs sat themselves down before us. Not all our entreaties, threats, or promises could make them retreat. One eternal clatter to be employed, and to give them money. Steadfastly we refused. After breakfast, my two companions were not well enough to move. So I went to survey alone. I told them, if they would let me go quietly and survey the scene, I would give them something on my return. It was useless. Eight would accompany me. Dodging me—stopping when I stopped—sitting down when I sat. At last, I said, 'Well, make yourselves comfortable.' And, after a while, seven left. The other told me he was afraid for me. It was a very bad country; and the men might come and knock me down. 'All right,' said I; 'let them come.' After surveying as well as I could, with such terrible annoyance, I returned to my companions, and found them keeping the fellows in good humour.

"The pyramids do not appear so large as I expected. Their

exterior is very rough. The external coating—part of which remains on the second—has been removed. The vast desert on which they stand, for miles and miles, is nothing but a grand cemetery for Memphis. We entered at Sakkâra tunnels, which run for miles, with recesses on each side, filled with mummies of the Apis, and other birds and animals, in jars of pottery, like sugar-loaves. Such had been the depredations, that the Pasha sent officers to guard the entrance; so that none can be taken away, else you should have had one. Near the same spot was a tunnel of enormous size, with arched recesses on each side cut out of the solid rock, each one having in it a granite (polished) sarcophagus. These sarcophagi, thirty-three in number, are immense things, about seven feet deep, seven and a-half wide, and thirteen and fifteen feet long. The sacred bulls were deposited in them. Some have hieroglyphics on them. To see them was worth coming to Egypt. Dashóor we saw at a distance; and into Abooséer we entered, and saw the silent hieroglyphics cut in the solid granite all round. Memphis—poor Memphis—once the glory of the world, and the terror of the natives! Its palm-groves remain, and scraps of figure-heads, and capitals of pillars; but it is all a mass of absolute ruin and emptiness. Yet no one can tell the exquisite pleasure I felt when standing by the colossal statue of Rameses, about seventy feet high, fallen with his face to the earth: that here Joseph had ruled, and Moses taught; and all that well-watered land of Goshen was the spot where Jacob and his sons lived, and laid the foundations of the Church of God. Before that, I stood gazing at Baal-zephon and Pihahiroth, till I saw the hosts of Israel and Pharaoh—the cloud moving

and returning—the Israelites safely landed by the well of Moses, (where Miss Yuseph gave me a nice cup of tea and two eggs.) The army of Pharaoh came after them, and the waters close upon them. And, at last, I heard the tambourine, and, looking round, it was Miriam and her maidens, veiled, but dancing and singing, 'Sing ye to the Lord,' &c.; and, old and stiff as I am, found myself dancing too. Oh, Allon, I wish you were here! 'Tush!' Well, I do. Nothing but fine days, and now comfortably cool. Love to all. Adieu.

"JAMES SHERMAN."

His second visit was anticipated with the sadness not only of great debility and diminished hope of life, but also of a long and lonely prospective journey to a foreign land, where death might overtake him; and with no one to minister to him save his grandson, a lad of seventeen, who, however affectionate and thoughtful, could hardly speak all the words of comfort or take all the measures of wisdom that as an invalid he needed. No other arrangement, however, seemed practicable.

He thus writes to Mr Freeman a few days before his departure:—

"BLACKHEATH, *Dec.* 19, 1860.

"Give me your prayers, that I may be blessed with the presence of my God and Saviour, however or wherever I may be located, and that, if it be His will, I may be restored to health and to my charge. I really feel better, and trust a change will go far to improve my chest."

"BLACKHEATH, *Dec.* 22, 1860.

"This season finds me, like yourself, with the hand of

God upon me, but with the comforts of God within me. The public little know the mental difficulty of the man who has lived all his life in public, when he is confined to one room and not suffered to engage in any of the services which have employed his energies for a whole life. Still, God has comforts suited to such a mind. You, my dear friend, are shut out from the external world—a great privation; but the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, new worlds of beauty and glory open—worlds which the vulture's eye hath not seen—and charm your soul not only with the prospect, but with the consciousness of present, and ultimately of more extended possession. Oh, it is a dignity unspeakable to call God '*mine*'—to be an heir of God through Christ—to be entitled to that heaven where He dwells, and those glories which He enjoys! A little while, and by grace we shall enter into complete enjoyment of all this promised and purchased possession. The Lord increase, my dear friend, your sanctified vision, and, after having so well served your generation, cause you to fall asleep in Him, and rise refreshed, glorified, and renewed, into the paradise of God. Peace be with you and yours.—I am, yours very affectionately,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

And to the church that he was leaving:—

TO THE CONGREGATION ASSEMBLING AT BLACKHEATH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

"BLACKHEATH, *Dec.* 27, 1860.

"MY BELOVED FRIENDS,—As you are aware that it has pleased our heavenly Father to lay me aside from the active

duties of my pastoral office, I deem it respectful to inform you of the arrangements I have made for supplying my lack of service, and maintaining among you an efficient ministry.

"While anxiously and prayerfully looking around me for some devoted brother of suitable talents to feed your souls, it pleased the Great Shepherd to bring from the antipodes a man of God, in whom I see combined those qualifications which command both my affection and confidence; and, if I may judge by the general expressions of approbation to which you have given utterance, *your* opinion of his ministerial ability coincides with mine.

"I have endeavoured to ascertain, from eminent ministers who knew Mr Beazley in Australia, the sentiments entertained respecting him and his ministry by the colonists and by his ministerial coadjutors; and it affords me much gratification to inform you that the testimony is uniform—that he is not only a minister of Christ of unblemished reputation, but a man who, for spirituality of mind, intellectual attainments, and devotion to his great work, stood second to none of his brethren in Sydney. He left with the unaffected regret of those who knew him best.

"He is willing to undertake the duties of the pastorate, including those of the pulpit, of the classes among the young, of visitation among your families, and whatever services may legitimately belong to pastoral work in this church, during my contemplated absence. As my representative, I leave him with confidence and thankfulness to take charge of your souls. It will remain for you to give expression to your sentiments respecting the propriety of such an arrange-

ment, and your acquiescence in the estimate I have formed of my friend Mr Beazley.

"With agonising feelings I have learned from my physicians that, in order to effect a cure, I must seek a warmer atmosphere, and remain away from my beloved flock for six months. I have no alternative but submissively to bow to what appears to be the Divine will; and I strive to submit cheerfully.

"I heartily and sincerely thank you for all the thoughtful kindness and sympathy you have ever shewn to me in the personal and relative afflictions which have befallen me—for the devout attention you have paid to my ministry—and especially, and above all, for your prayers and ready co-operation in works of mercy and usefulness. Nor can I forget to thank the children of the congregation for the deep interest they have shewn for my recovery, and for their fervent supplications to God on my behalf. Precious lambs! may the Good Shepherd fold them in His arms, and carry them in His bosom!

"Physicians assure me that the attack is but temporary, and that warmth and more cloudless skies are, at this season, likely to restore me to such a portion of strength as will enable me to resume, if not all, yet a portion of my duties to my beloved flock at the termination of this respite from labour.

"It will be a part of my pleasure while absent to bear you and your families on my heart before God, that He would fill you with His love as a motive-power to spiritual effort, and give you grace to study to please Him yet more and more. I am sure you will return this act of affection.

Brethren, pray for me, that the chains may fall off from my tongue, and that I may meet you again, as Peter met the church which had assembled to pray for him, to testify to one another that the God whom we serve is a God hearing and answering prayer.—I am, my dear friends, your affectionate pastor,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

After this letter was read to the church, at a church-meeting called for the purpose, the pastor was commended in prayer to the care of God's merciful providence, and two resolutions were passed—the first accepting for six months the ministerial services of Mr Bedzley, and welcoming him; and the second expressing the sympathy and affection of the church for their beloved pastor.

CHAPTER II.

MR SHERMAN'S grandson, Mr Edwin Burls, has supplied materials for the following incidents of his journey. It is little more than the record of a hopeless struggle with disease.

Mr Sherman started on his journey by the tidal train on the 7th of January 1861. The passage from Dover to Boulogne was a very rough one, the snow falling heavily. The steamer narrowly escaped stranding, having missed Boulogne harbour and got amongst breakers in five fathoms water. For two hours she was beating about, and then mercifully sighted the Boulogne lights, and shortly afterwards entered the harbour. A rough

passage of four hours, attended with great excitement, brought on a return of hemorrhage, and produced great exhaustion. He arrived in Paris, however, the next day, and the day after proceeded to Lyons, where he rested a day, and then journeyed on to Marseilles, when he began to derive benefit from the balmy air of the south, and laid aside, first his respirator, and then his greatcoat, and once more took a walk in the open air, which he had not before done for months. He stayed in Marseilles only one day, but it seemed to have a wonderful restorative effect; and he was in quite good spirits when on the Saturday morning he left Marseilles with a gentle wind and an almost smooth sea. In the evening, however, it became rougher, and the hemorrhage returned. On the Sunday, however, it was calmer, and Mr Sherman was able to get on deck and enjoy the glorious sunshine. He reached Malta on Monday evening, and at the landing-place had to run the usual gauntlet of clamorous porters; before the hotel was reached, they commenced a fight, in which Mr Sherman received a blow on the head from a flag-pole, which knocked off his hat and greatly stunned him, and but for assistance he would have fallen and been trodden upon in the *mêlée*. The excitement and shock of this misadventure, combined with excessive hemorrhage on the voyage, had, however, so debilitated him that he was not able to leave the hotel for some days. Many kind Christian friends called upon him and cheered him by their conversation; amongst them the Rev. Mr Lowndes, the agent of the Bible Society in Malta, and the Rev. G. Wisely, the minister of the Scotch church, with both of whom he enjoyed much cheering fellowship, and for whose delicate attentions

and many acts of kindness during his stay in the island he often expressed his deep sense of gratitude. After a few days, he was able to take daily drives in a close carriage, and seemed to increase in strength; then he exchanged the close carriage for an open one, and supplemented his drives by daily walks; the hemorrhage nearly ceased, his cough became less distressing, and he again began to hope that he might return to his home and work in perfectly recovered health. He at length felt himself able to preach in Mr Wisely's church, and it was announced that, if the state of his health permitted, the Rev. J. Sherman, of London, would preach on the following Sunday, Feb. 24. The church was crowded to excess, by both military and civilians. Mr Wisely conducted the devotional services, and when Mr Sherman ascended the pulpit, his cough, which had been troublesome, left him, his strength seemed renewed, and he apparently preached with his old vigour. He preached from Col. i. 18, for an hour and ten minutes, to a congregation that listened with breathless attention, and were so wrapt in his discourse that they seemed surprised when he finished.

Instead of this great and, as it seemed, unwise exertion proving injurious to him, as might have been expected, it had apparently an opposite effect. He enjoyed an undisturbed night, and the next day felt better than he had done since his arrival. His medical men, however, both in England and in Malta, recommended a visit to Egypt as the surest means of speedy restoration. On the 2d of March, therefore, he sailed in the *Pera* for Alexandria. The voyage was a very favourable one, and he much enjoyed it. He was constantly on deck, and seemed quite a new man. Nothing

seemed to injure him. After spending a week at Alexandria, he proceeded to Cairo, and found very comfortable hotel-accommodation. On the day of his arrival, the sirocco wind was blowing, the atmosphere was heavily charged with sand, and was very dry and hot. The effect was injurious, and the hemorrhage returned, accompanied with an increased cough, and brought on consequent debility. After four days' sojourn at the hotel, Mr Sherman accepted an invitation from Mr Air, agent of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, to visit him at his residence, a farm in "the land of Goshen," about five miles from Cairo; but this being situated on the borders of the desert, the air proved too dry for Mr Sherman, and he rapidly grew worse. He obtained little sleep during the night—the hemorrhage became excessive—his cough incessant—the good effected at Malta was undone, and he seemed a wreck of his former self. So debilitated did he become, that both he and his grandson were alarmed. The English physician in Cairo was consulted, who ordered him instantly to leave Goshen, either for Suez or Alexandria. Mr Sherman decided to return to Alexandria, it being 200 miles nearer home than Suez. He accordingly took leave of his kind friends, Mr and Mrs Air, whose attentions and solicitudes for his comfort had been most unremitting.

Singularly enough, his hemorrhage ceased as soon as he arrived in Alexandria, although for the previous fortnight it had been incessant. Nor did it recur for several days. He determined, however, to return to Malta as soon as possible; but the first steamer after his arrival at Alexandria was so full that not a single berth could be obtained. While waiting for the next, however, he continued to improve, and took

daily carriage or donkey rides. The next boat for Malta was, fortunately, the *Pera*, whose officers all knew Mr Sherman, and did their utmost to minister to his comfort. After a favourable voyage, he again reached Malta on the 14th of April. During the seven weeks of his absence he had suffered so much, and had become so debilitated, that he was no better than when he left England. The magnificent weather, however, and the careful attention of kind friends, gradually recruited him, and he regained his lost ground. But after he had been improving for a fortnight, he was seized with a severe gastric attack; which, however, yielded to prompt treatment. Shortly afterwards, while taking a drive, he met with an accident. The horse took fright and ran away —the driver losing all control over him—and, finally, upset the carriage in a narrow lane. Thanks to a wall, against which it fell, the carriage was not completely overturned, and Mr Sherman escaped with only a few bruises. But the fright had such an effect upon him, that it produced violent palpitation of the heart, which continued for a day or two, and greatly weakened him. These untoward events retarded his recovery; but, on the whole, he rapidly improved:—so that, about the middle of May, he became anxious to return to England, in order to make some arrangements about his pastorate at Blackheath; for he felt that the following winter would have to be spent in a warmer climate. His medical advisers strongly dissuaded him from this, urging him to remain in the Mediterranean another year. He thought himself, however, well enough to undertake the journey without injury; and that, having completed the arrangements which he contemplated, he might return in

two or three months. On the 21st of May, he left Malta. The passage, as far as Gibraltar, being most favourable, Mr Sherman derived manifest benefit from it, and greatly enjoyed it. Two clergymen, one of whom he knew, were on board, whose society greatly added to his enjoyment. Both had likewise been in quest of health, and both died before he did. After leaving Gibraltar, some days of bad weather confined him below, and he suffered much from the heated atmosphere. He determined, therefore, to go on deck for a little fresh air, and unwisely remained there for a couple of hours; the effect of which was a severe cold, which brought on a recurrence of the hemorrhage, of which he had had no symptoms since leaving Egypt. His cough also returned, and sleepless nights; so that he reached Southampton in a state of great prostration; and, within a few days of his arrival at Blackheath, his death seemed imminent.

The following letters were written during his absence, chiefly to his old and affectionate friend, Mrs Mackrell, who, in conjunction with his children, Mrs Burls and Mr and Mrs Westran Sherman, and his devoted servant, attended him during the last weeks of his illness with all the tenderness and solicitude of a sister.

TO MRS MACKRELL.

"CLARENCE HOTEL, MALTA, *Jan.* 16, 1861.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—A blazing sun shoots his rays into my room, and a delicious breeze makes it sufficiently cool. I look out on a sort of Regent Square—people traversing up and down in crowds—a beautiful garden opposite my

window, with hundreds of oranges on the trees—priests, beggars, and guides jostling one another in every direction —a side view of the ocean—a deep blue sky, without a cloud—and at night the stars looking so large, near, and brilliant, that I can scarcely believe I am only four and a-half days from the frost and snow of England. The climate seems most delicious, and well adapted to invalids. But as this is only my second day here, I must not say too much in its favour till I have longer tried it.

"The voyage from Marseilles was pleasant enough; but the journey through France, where the weather was intensely cold till we arrived at Avignon, did not suit me. The bleeding was aggravated, and I was very poorly. Except the first day on board, I was obliged to remain below, as the sea air and cold were more than I could bear. The voyage was only sixty hours. The company was agreeable, but the ladies suffered extremely. Edwin was prostrate as soon as the vessel made one roll, and continued fasting and sleeping till we arrived, but was perfectly well immediately afterwards. He is a good, attentive, companionable lad, and does all he can to assist me. Few, however, know and believe my weakness—my good spirits deceive them. Last night, I had the most terrible attack I have endured since my illness, not of bleeding, but of violent cough and expectoration. It lasted for more than an hour, till I was spent beyond description. It seemed to me something like an aggravated form of whooping-cough. I could scarcely gain time to breathe, and the exhaustion that followed was fearful. Every limb and bone seems to ache and cry for rest this morning—my head seems parting asunder. Edwin

was frightened, as well as myself. What would I have given then for your kind hand and presence! Sometimes I think I shall never see my home again, although all my letters to home are cheerful. But all is and will be well. My heavenly Father's comforts are the best comforts, and He has now brought me to depend on Him when human aid is denied me. Pray let me hear from you soon. Love to all the children. Get every bit of news into your letter which you can. Peace and love be with you.—I am, yours affectionately,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

TO THE SAME.

"ALEXANDRIA, ON BOARD THE 'PERA,'
March 5, 1861.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Here we are in this magnificent harbour. They keep me on board till they start on the return voyage to-morrow at eleven o'clock. We arrived here about noon to-day, after a splendid passage of three days from Malta—not a soul sick all the way, with no more motion in the vessel than in a Gravesend steamer. The officers vie with each other in shewing me attention. Every convenience that I could have in a cabin made to hold four, given to two of us, made us feel, as Edwin would say, 'jolly comfortable.' The Pasha has just returned from his pilgrimage to Medina. Alexandria is to be illuminated for three days, and he is to go in procession. I have not yet made up my mind whether to remain here till over Sunday, or push on to Cairo. You see I am beginning to talk rather largely, and I think you would hardly believe the real benefit

I seem to have gained by the warm weather. From the voyage here I have derived as much benefit as possible: above all, indeed, that I have gained before. Not only has the bleeding ceased, but the cough is much looser and less frequent. On the whole, therefore, I have reason to be very thankful for that which bears the aspect of a substantial improvement. Egypt seems now in its beauty. The heat is not overpowering, and not a fly is to be seen. I have been riding out all the afternoon, and feel much refreshed, so that, perhaps, I write in good spirits; but I do not think I exaggerate my improvement. You will, I am sure, rejoice with me. Though Malta laid the foundation for amendment, I do not think the climate so suitable for me as Egypt. The sirocco winds made me very prostrate, as you have sometimes seen me; but they do not prevail here, and it is much warmer. Now I am obliged to go forth with my wide-awake covered with calico, and a tail behind. I thank God for my hope, and pray for its continuance. How I long to see you! You have spoiled me by your attentions. 'Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.' Love to all the family, and as much as you would like for yourself.—Yours affectionately,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

TO THE SAME.

"CAIRO, *March* 18, 1861.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I wish I could say I was well; but, though better, the cough tries me terribly at times, and every little colder blast seems to give me fresh cold. I do not forget that I am able to go out without my respirator, and

that till sunset I can walk about and enjoy the open air, which I could not do in England; but without making a cross for the future, the prospect of a future winter in England is not very encouraging. However, sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. I cannot describe how many times I have wished for you. My mind is quite at ease about the church—everything seems to be going on there well and satisfactorily. Beazley is well approved, and the congregation good. All speak affectionately of him. I had a letter yesterday from Georgina, who is full of your praises—your husband, the children, the piano, and everything at Wandsworth, specially the bath-room. It seems I shall stand but little chance in competition with 'the limes.' I had written to Westran before your letter arrived; but remember I have written to him and you more than to any others,—indeed, so large has become my correspondence, that it has become a burden. This week I have written twelve letters, and this morning I received five, which must all be answered; so that I can scarcely do anything but take my walk and meals and write letters.

"This week I go to Goshen—a farm of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, where they rear their poultry and fatten cattle for themselves—and after a few days, I go on to Suez, where I expect to meet Guy; so that, if you write again, your letters must be directed to me, '*Poste Restante*, Alexandria,' where I shall be in about a month from this on my way back to Malta. I may return home by Rome or Athens, but that will wholly depend on my health and means. My present purpose is to be home by the end of May by Gibraltar. If I do, it is probable I shall go by the

Pera from Alexandria to Malta, and then determine my future route. I expect to be at Alexandria by the 14th April, and at Malta by the 20th.

"I hear from Mrs W. a good account of your health and that of the children. Mr M. is, I trust, better. Oh that he would give up everything but his own profession, which is more than enough to tax all his energies! Churchwardenships and public offices take him from the open air of his beautiful garden and blooming fields, which would supply him with fresh air and health after the toils of the day. I trust he will be wise before it is too late. You and nine reasons beside should make him pause. Pray give my love to him, and tell him if in later years I had been moderate, I had not been as I am now—useless.

"The glorious sun is shining with sufficient heat to make a muslin cover over the wide-awake agreeable—no cloud to be seen—the dust something fearful—the desert a blazing of gold and amber. Edwin went yesterday up and into the Pyramids—to Sakkâra, Abooséer, and Memphis, not a little delighted. It is a rare benefit to him, and I trust he will be the better for it. Now peace and love be with you. You see by close writing I have given you a long letter. Will you enclose the letter to Mr Freeman in an envelope and send it by post? Love to all.—Yours affectionately,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

TO WM. FREEMAN, ESQ.

"CAIRO, *March* 13, 1861.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your welcome letter gave me tidings of your health, both in body and mind. The choicest of all

mercies is a thriving soul in a healthful body. And with one exception respecting your body, this is your case. Even the shutting out of light from your tabernacle has opened your mental windows, and let in more of the glorious beams of the Sun of Righteousness; so that you have more than compensation for your loss. Splendid as are the manifestations of His power and Godhead in the works in heaven and earth, the exhibition of His glory and grace, in the person of His Elect One, is infinitely above them. Part of the song in heaven will be about His creative goodness; but the chief burden is salvation—our salvation. When we reach that Palestine, and have the map of our journeyings spread out before our enlightened eyes, we shall necessarily exclaim, 'He led them forth by a right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.' It is only a little longer, and the Master will come and call for us; and if I am called first, I will look out for and welcome my old friend to those seats of the blessed.

"My health on the whole is greatly improved. The hemorrhage has subsided, and the cough, though troublesome, is not so violent. I go out without a respirator, and enjoy the bright beams of the glorious sun. It is a wondrous climate at this season, and during the winter months about the heat of our June. The dust, the filth and ignorance and wretchedness of the natives exceed belief; and the worst is, that ignorance of their language, &c., separates you from them, so that no good can even be attempted. But the glorious light will shine, and Egypt shall be visited with the light of life. Give my love to Mr Hall, and tell him I had a nice visit from his brother, who diligently sought me out

at Malta, and spent an hour with me. Remember me affectionately to Mrs F., and all your family.—Yours affectionately,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

TO MRS MACKRELL.

"GOSHEN, *March* 22, 1861.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—With all your reproaches about writing, I think you will find that I have written, within one, as many letters to you as you have to me. Every mail brings me about seven letters on an average. Each has to be answered, beside those to the church, Beasley, &c. Sometimes for days I am utterly unable to write. The chest presses me down to the lowest depths, and makes me utterly unfit for every exertion. Then, when I get better, I am obliged to make up for lost time, and send out a number of letters. Six go out this morning. So I am not so bad and forgetful as you seem to think. I am often ashamed of myself for doing so little, but the prostration which you have witnessed is so terrible, that I cannot rise alone till the oppression is removed. The last fortnight has been a terrible trial. The hemorrhage returned at Cairo, equal to anything I had at home, and has continued up to this morning. It was so little to-day that I hope it will now leave me; but it indicates a state that requires constant watching, and will, I fear, be my plague in winter, except I am removed to a better state.

"Though my spirits have not been bad, yet I have wanted power to enjoy divine things, and also some one to talk to me. By day, Edwin is mostly away from me, taking rambles

with friends. If I had you to walk with, as in the Morden College grounds, who would talk or not as it pleased me, it would be better for me. The loneliness is desperate; but I try to forget it and be happy. Often I hide a sad heart under a merry face. Dr Peterson, whom I have consulted, advises me to visit Suez; so in a day or two I shall go there, then return here for Alexandria, and from thence to Malta. No place seems to have agreed with me so well as Malta. I am concerned to hear of Emily's health. A little change will, I trust, soon get up. Give my love to the chicks and your good husband. When shall I be able to come and see you all?—I am, very affectionately yours,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

TO THE SAME.

"ALEXANDRIA, *April* 2, 1861.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—How little I thought when I entered Cairo, what would be the result. I seemed to be getting better till then; but from that day, for three weeks, I had not a day's, scarcely an hour's, freedom from hemorrhage, and it was frightfully copious. The house, though beautifully situated in Goshen, and my friends very kind, was lonely. Everything contributes to work on my nerves, and render me dispirited, though I tried hard to fight against it and not to shew it. As the external air irritated the lungs, I was almost confined to the house, pacing a drawing-room alone, reading, or writing. My nights were quite as bad as you ever saw them. Dr Peterson suggested that the air was too dry for me, and advised me to try Suez; but as that was a hundred miles further from home, and I could gain similar

advantages at Alexandria, I came hither on Saturday last, and immediately the hemorrhage ceased. From Saturday till Tuesday I have had no return, and feel much better, though greatly weakened, as you may suppose. It is not unlikely that the wind over the desert carries small particles of sand into the air, which irritates membranes in so delicate a state as mine. I go hence to Malta on Thursday, and as it agreed with me formerly, I trust it will again. I should like to return to England about the middle or end of May. I intend going to Southampton, and will let you know by what boat. My trust is steadfast. In the midst of my agony one night—for I can scarcely use another word so expressive—that promise came with great power, 'My peace I give unto you, let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' That peace, amid all my changes, I have enjoyed; but, oh, how I long to see my home once more! I really think I cannot leave England again. Love to Mr M. and all the chicks.—Yours affectionately,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

TO THE CHURCH AT BLACKHEATH.

"39 STRADA LEVANTE, MALTA, *April* 16, 1861.

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,—Forty years ago this day, I began my pastorate at Reading! What a large space of time seems to have been traversed; and yet, looked back upon, how swiftly it has fled! What a child of Providence have I been,—what mercies and forgivenesses have been dealt out to me by the hand of my Saviour and Master! As a pilgrim, I crossed the Avon with my staff, and at last became 'two bands.' At Reading—*there* I buried Mary. At Surrey—*there* I

buried Martha and two Selinas. At Blackheath—*there* I buried Martha the younger! One of the bands is entirely removed—the other is broken; still *I* live on, a monument of sparing and forgiving mercy! 'O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.' Though the anniversary of the day that took the last portion of one band entirely from me was a melancholy day—for I spent it as a captive in the land of Goshen—yet my aching heart could not help finding consolation in the fact, that I have the fullest confidence that the whole of the second band is now in heaven with the two portions of the first. And if we who are alive and remain of the first band are found in Christ and worthy and faithful, we also shall be there; and then the two bands will form a whole family in heaven—a glorious hope.

"If, during these forty years, I have done some good—drawn some souls to Christ, and comforted broken hearts on their pilgrimage to the Jerusalem above—I owe it entirely to the grace, influence, and sovereign might of Him who put me into the ministry! Patient, forbearing, sustaining has He been to the most feeble and sinful among His servants. Ah, what a sad review does a period of forty years allow a man to take of what he has done, and what he has left undone! What I have left wholly *undone*, and the feebleness, pride, irresolution, and want of perseverance in what I have *done*, render the atonement very precious to me. Instead of being 'a burning and shining light,' the most of my life has been like 'smoking flax,'—occasionally, by the gales of the Spirit, blown into a flame, but subsiding again into a gleaming light and smoke. But my Master has not

quenched it; nor has He suffered sin, Satan, worldliness, or the flatteries of friends and the designs of enemies to quench it. Blessed be His name, it is the 'smoking flax' still!—no flame, but not extinguished!

"Very pleasant has been *the last portion* of the forty years among *you*. I have laboured among you in weakness and fear—yet often tasting that the Lord is gracious. No portion of my ministry has yielded me more pleasure. The pulpit at Blackheath has not unfrequently been to me the gate of heaven; and, if I may credit the testimony of the majority of the congregation, the doctrine has dropped on them as rain on the tender herb. Oh, it brightens my desolate moments, that the last years of my life have not been entirely a blank! And, now that the monition seems, like 'the first trumpet,' to sound in the distance, 'Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward,' I trust, in the brief period which may elapse while I am making up my accounts before the 'seventh trumpet' shall sound, I may be permitted to serve you, if only a little, and close my stewardship among you with joy. But He who has been so gracious to me for forty years knows what is best, and into His hands I commit my spirit and my times. Only pray for me, that my faith fail not.

"It gratifies me to report that I am better. I have been brought very low, but Malta has revived me, and I trust the time I stay here, before returning home, will sufficiently renovate me to pay my vows with you in the house of God, our pleasant and 'amiable' tabernacle. My love in Christ be with you all.—Your most affectionate pastor,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

TO MRS MACKRELL.

"39 STRADA, MALTA, *April* 17, 1861.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I received your last letter at Alexandria. Your former letter, directed by Mr Mackrell, was sent on here, so that they came within two days of each other. I arrived here on Sunday afternoon at five o'clock, much fatigued, but better than I had been. Monday was a day of great depression and weakness. Tuesday, a good day. I was able to go to the rooms and read the paper; but to-day I am prostrate again—exceedingly feeble—so that I have not been able to go out. I wrote to the church yesterday in good spirits. It was the fortieth anniversary of my taking the pastorate at Reading, and, therefore, a day of remembrance and humiliation. Sometimes I think I shall never preach again. I do not think I am so strong as when I left home, and fear I shall never recover the reduction of my strength in Egypt. Dr Kidd urges me to remain till the latter end of May before I return home, or I should come immediately, believing, as I do, that home is the proper place for me now; for I have comforts at home which I cannot get here. Though there is everything a man in health could wish for, the little attentions an invalid requires are not to be bought. They come from those who love him, and know his habits. My appetite is not so good. The meat you get here has not the moisture of English mutton and beef. To-morrow I trust I shall be better, and able to go out again; but when at home, as to-day, faint, weak, and weary, the day seems long, as I cannot relieve it much by reading. Well, I trust God will grant me the

blessing to reach my own abode, and there to meet you in peace, and, if it please Him, in improved health. Pray for me, that faith and patience may hold out to the end, and that I may finish my course with joy. Love to all.—Ever yours affectionately.

"JAMES SHERMAN."

After Mr Sherman's arrival at home he got rapidly worse. He felt that the end was approaching, and "set his house in order." In June, he seemed to be dying. None who left his bedside in the evening could with any probability calculate upon seeing him in the morning. But in simple faith he "worshipped," and "gave commandment concerning his bones." All the arrangements for his funeral—not to be carried out until seven months afterwards—were then made by him. At the end of June, the anniversary of Cheshunt College occurred. To its tutors, students, and friends, he sent the following dying words:—

TO THE FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS OF CHESHUNT COLLEGE PRESENT AT THIS ANNIVERSARY OF 1861.

"*July* 4, 1861.

"Hear a few words from a dying man. I always thought it a great affliction when, by any circumstances, I was prevented from attending the anniversary of Cheshunt College; but as I now feel I am going to celebrate the story of redeeming love in a brighter world, I cannot repine at my absence this day. Heartily do I rejoice in the present state of the college. First, in the man of God who presides over the students, and who, by his heavenly walk, casts such a

benign and blessed influence over the young men committed to his care. I pray God that he may be spared for many years to fulfil the duties of his sacred calling. To the students, so richly favoured by the heavenly influence falling around them, permit me to say a kind and affectionate word. The Lord Jesus, my young friends, has done you unspeakable honour by putting you into the ministry. Oh, be not ashamed of Him! Let His atonement be the subject of your teaching. Exalt Him in His person higher and higher in every sermon. Exhibit Him in His love, grace, and compassion to the lost and helpless, until your own hearts glow with the description, and send words like burning coals out of your mouth to persuade sinners to be reconciled to God. Imitate His spirit; have frequent communion with Him; pray Him to illuminate your souls, that you may preach to men the great things of God's law. And then, at last, He will give you a crown of righteousness which shall not fade away. After forty-five years of service, I bear Him witness that, had I served Him more faithfully, I should have been more useful and happy. But He saved me by grace. By abundant grace He put me into the ministry, and through grace will, I trust, receive me into His everlasting habitations.

"To you, dear friends, who support by your liberality and friendly care this institution, I would say—Continue your gifts and your labours. It is a short time the Master gives us to work. It is impossible to give to a nobler object than that of training men of God for publishing the salvation of Christ throughout the world; and if His good Spirit touch this day a new spring of liberality in your

souls, yield to its influence, and gratify your old and dying friend. Farewell till the morning of the archangel's trump.

"JAMES SHERMAN."

To this letter the meeting responded in the following resolution:—

"That this assembly has heard with deep regret of the serious illness of the Rev. James Sherman, for so many years the beloved and invaluable secretary of the college; and, while it humbly bows to the will of God concerning him, it rejoices to hear that its beloved friend has been kept in perfect peace, and in calm, expectant joy. This assembly would assure Mr Sherman of its tender sympathy with him in his weakness and sufferings, and of its fervent prayers that He, whom he has so well served in the gospel of His Son, will still be with him and comfort him, and, in continued spiritual strength and joy, abundantly fulfil His own 'exceeding great and precious promises.'"

But the end was not yet. Many months of weary anxiety had yet to elapse before he was released. To the great surprise of all his friends, the immediate cause of his extreme prostration—an abscess upon the lungs—was removed. He was again able to take short drives; and on two occasions he unexpectedly appeared in the chapel,—the first, the Sunday after the appointment of Mr Beazley as his co-pastor, when, in a few affectionate words, he commended him to the church, and, in a short, fervent prayer, commended him to God. "I have come," said he to the church, "as one from the dead; but I have come to give a welcome

to my beloved brother. I doubt not that his mission is from heaven. God grant that he may be instrumental in converting many souls! As for myself, I shall see your faces no more; but it is one of the joys of my life to be able to bid my brother welcome, and then to bid you farewell. We shall all meet at the judgment-seat of Christ. See that we are found of Him." He was able, however, on the first day of September to appear at the Lord's table, and again to utter to the church a few parting words—how affecting, how solemn, only those who were present can understand. It was as if "one *had* come from the dead." The deadly pallor—the shrunken cheeks—the trembling frame—the awe as of death itself upon him, and upon the congregation, constituted a chamber of death as it were in the very church of the living. All felt that, like the Master at His last passover feast, he would not henceforth drink of the fruit of the vine with them until they should drink it new in the Father's kingdom. And so it proved.

Amid the fluctuations of these months of extreme disease, his faith and patience were sorely tested. Throughout almost the whole of that period, the writer saw him very frequently, and often in very touching circumstances. One occasion was in September, when his grandchild, the son of J. Westran Sherman, Esq., was baptized. Mr Sherman had thought that he might be able to conduct the little drawing-room service; but when the hour arrived, his weakness was too great. The writer had to conduct the service for him. All that Mr Sherman could do was simply to receive the child put into his arms, to administer the baptism, and utter a single sentence of loving benediction. It was a most affecting

scene,—a touching contrast of the extremes of life—the smiling, unconscious infant thus "baptized for the dead" amid the tears and prayers of all present, and the saintly patriarch, like another Simeon, holding him in his trembling arms, and, with pallid face and faltering speech, uttering what all felt to be a dying blessing.

The thread of life became so attenuated that it seemed almost a miracle that it did not snap. At each visit I felt as if I might linger till the end. No marvel that this long and weary waiting, with its physical distress, once or twice depressed him. He felt "the valley to be long and dark." I found him one day in the early part of this period greatly distressed. His "heart was troubled," his countenance worn with anguish. "It is," said he, "very dark—I have no light." And no words that could be spoken to him relieved him—he "refused to be comforted." And thus it continued for nearly a fortnight—"neither sun nor stars in many days appeared." "He walked in darkness, and had no light." And in this mood, not of despair, but of depression, he addressed a letter to his church, which awakened in its members many painful and prayerful anxieties. But at length his wonted peace and faith returned. It was only "the sorrow that endures for a night"—"joy came in the morning." He had not failed, but only feared—"feared as he entered the cloud;" but the vision of his glorified Lord brake upon him, and amid the fluctuations of the seven weary months that remained, he was "kept in perfect peace, his mind stayed upon God."

At no period of his illness were his religious feelings rapturous, or even joyous; but they were calm and confident

His was a quiet, peaceful faith, which, rightly estimated, is far more natural and assuring than rapture. The solemn awe of death was upon him; he felt as sinful man must feel when he realises his approach to the Judge of all the earth. His sense of unworthiness was profound—his expressions of humility were frequent and strong; but it was humility, and not fear. He "walked through the valley of the shadow of death, but he feared no evil," for the Good Shepherd was with him—"His rod and His staff they comforted him." He "knew in whom he had believed." Once or twice his expressions did kindle into something like rapture. One day some words which I spake to cheer his wearied spirit brought some verses to his recollection. His face was lit up with its old enthusiasm—his voice forgot its languor, and, for the last time I believe, regained its old pulpit fulness and fervour, as he quoted and appropriated Simeon's *Nunc Dimittis*:—

"Jesus, the vision of Thy face
Hath overpowering charms;
Scarce shall I feel death's cold embrace
If Christ be in my arms.
Now while ye hear my heart-strings break,
How sweet my minutes roll;
A mortal paleness on my cheek,
And glory in my soul."

For a moment we "saw his face as it had been the face of an angel"—a sudden gorgeous sunset flush. It passed away, and left the cold grey pallor of evening behind.

Many friends visited him during these lingering months, and to all he expressed himself with calm confidence and with gratitude to the God who was so gently dealing with him.

A few days before his death, when he could but just articulate, he said, in reply to my inquiry how he was, "Near home." On a remark being made about the length and weariness of the way, he instantly rejoined, "It is all right—all is bright—there are no clouds." I saw him once again, but it was for little more than a clasp of the hand, a dying instruction, and a parting prayer; and then on Saturday, February 15, 1862, he fell asleep, having "served his generation according to the will of God;"—another proof of the sustaining power, under circumstances that peculiarly tested it, of the gospel that he had preached.

CHAPTER III.

DURING these months of illness he sent frequent communications to his church, mostly on the Sabbath morning:—"Adieus," not knowing

> "When the last time was the last."

And the church made prayer without ceasing for their dying pastor.

"On Thursday, the 13th June 1861," says a memorandum of the deacons, "it being evident that the pastor was fast sinking, the usual evening service was principally occupied in special supplications on his behalf, and afterwards the three deacons who were present proceeded, in accordance with his expressed desire, to pay him a united visit, which they could not but feel was to be a final one.

After they had pressed his hand and taken seats, he expressed, in broken and scarcely audible utterance, his conviction that his end was very near, as his weakness was very great, and increasing. Yet he was unwilling to lose the opportunity of bidding them a solemn and affectionate farewell. He expressed his thanks for their cordial and ready co-operation with him in conducting the affairs of the church, and originating and sustaining various schemes of usefulness, as well as for the affectionate character of their intercourse with him. He observed that in no period of his ministerial career had he experienced greater enjoyment in his work than during the few years he had been at Blackheath; that often his delight in preaching a crucified Saviour had amounted to exultation; and that he now realised the solidity of that salvation which he had spent his life in commending to others, quoting 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.' He could boast of no raptures, but enjoyed calm and assured peace, based upon a firm reliance on the atonement and the advocacy of the Divine Saviour. He trusted that wisdom and gracious assistance would be given in securing a continuance of the efficient preaching of the same doctrines he had laboured to inculcate. He could have wished that arrangements for a co-pastorate, which he had previously strongly recommended, had been carried out, as tending to simplify proceedings in filling his place; but added, that the affair must now take its ordinary course. He expressed his confidence that, if this matter were happily arranged, and that if the additions it would be found necessary to make to

the number of the deacons were men of the right stamp, the church he had had the happiness of planting would grow and flourish. He concluded by expressing his certainty that he and his deacons would all meet again in a better and brighter world."

The following spontaneous expression of affection and sympathy from the attendants at a prayer-meeting, held June 17, to supplicate the blessing of God on behalf of their afflicted pastor, was sent to him:—

"BELOVED PASTOR,—It is not necessary for us to address you in this manner to prove our heartfelt sympathy with you in your present heavy trial. You need no such assurance from us. But when we remember the sacred relation which you sustain towards us, as our spiritual guide, the precious truths which we have so often heard from your lips, and the great benefit we have derived from your preaching, we cannot refrain from recording, in this way, and at this time, our gratitude to our heavenly Father that we have been permitted for so long a period to enjoy your ministry. We thank our God, also, for your uniform kindness, your valued friendship, and for the truly Christian example you have set before us.

"We have, indeed, valued your useful ministry. We have appreciated your consistent character. And we would venture to express the hope that that example is not finally withdrawn from us—that that ministry is not closed; but that God, who has all power in His hands, may yet, in answer to our fervent and united prayers, restore you to us, though it be but for a season. Oh, sir, it would delight our

souls to see you once more among us, proclaiming the gospe of Christ. But if, beloved pastor, God has otherwise determined, rest assured that, so long as He shall spare you, we will be instant in prayer, that all needful grace may be given you, and, when you depart hence, that an abundant entrance may be ministered to you into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"We very affectionately commend you to the sympathy of your Saviour. May He sustain, and comfort, and bless you! May His gracious Spirit fill your heart! May He abide with you to the end! And may we meet you in the world where *parting* and *death* are unknown! We are, beloved pastor, a portion of your affectionate and sympathising church-members and friends."

The following letter was sent by Mr Hall, in answer to a request from Mr Sherman that he would take part in his funeral services:—

"*June* 18, 1861.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I felt it so sad to receive the last commission from you, that I failed to say how great an honour and privilege I shall esteem it to take *any* part in the sorrowful ceremonial. I esteem it very kind in you to desire it, when you have so many older friends. I shall always cherish a lively sense of your affectionate interest in me; your kindness when I was a student, receiving me to your house and your pulpit; your efforts to bring me to Poplar; your *coming to marry us;* your most hearty and generous introduction of me to Surrey Chapel, the manner and spirit of which could not be excelled. It has been a great

joy to me to witness the love of the people to yourself. It has been and will be a strong additional bond of sympathy between them and me. Very many of them are your spiritual children. Being dead, you will still speak through many years. I beg your dying prayers, that by the grace of God I may be enabled to carry forward His work in Surrey Chapel; that, like my predecessors, I may determine to know nothing but Christ, and Him crucified; and that, preserved faithful unto death, I may meet you and R. Hill in the presence of the Master, and 'not be ashamed.' The longer I live, and the more I preach, the stronger is my conviction that the sinner's only hope is in what the Saviour has done and is doing. May His all-sufficient atonement, His prevailing intercession, His indwelling Spirit, keep your mind in perfect peace, stayed on Him! Be assured of the constant prayers and most hearty sympathy of my dear wife and Mrs Gordon, as well as of, dear friend, yours affectionately, in hope of eternal reunion,

"NEWMAN HALL."

The following letters were sent by Mr Sherman to the church:—

"*July* 14, 1861.

"MY BELOVED FLOCK,—I congratulate you on entering your beautiful sanctuary this morning, and commencing the eighth year of your residence as a people on this hallowed spot. Oh, how I should like to be among you, singing His high praises who hath done such great things for you! But He, who regulates my affairs, has, both in wisdom

and love, seen fit to cause me to remain His prisoner, and worship only in spirit with you.

'Cast as a broken vessel by,
Thy will I can no longer do;
Yet while a daily death I die,
Thy power I may in weakness show;
My patience may Thy glory raise,
My speechless woe proclaim Thy praise.'

"May this be to you a new year of blessedness! If the under shepherd is to be removed, may the Chief Shepherd come among you; feed, nourish, and strengthen you through the ministry; and lead you, by rivers of Divine influence, to sanctify and render you more like Himself. Though my entrance into the upper sanctuary is delayed, I cannot think it very far off.

"Pray for me that I may glorify God in the fires, and become more refined by their heat, and fitted to shine among His holy ones in a world of sanctity and love.—Your affectionate pastor,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

"SUNDAY MORNING, *July* 21, 1861.

"MY BELOVED FLOCK,—I had thought that long ago I should have been singing the high praises of my Saviour in the upper sanctuary; but it is still the pleasure of my heavenly Father to keep me among you on earth—I hope for some purpose that will display His wisdom and grace.

"Certainly I am much better than I was, and sometimes I flatter myself with the hope that I may yet appear among you once more; if not to labour, to join in worship. Whatsoever His will, I pray He may be glorified thereby.

Continue your petitions on my behalf, that I may be satisfied with the arrangements of Infinite Wisdom, and be ready to suffer or labour, as shall best subserve His glorious designs. —I am, my beloved flock, your affectionate pastor,

"J. SHERMAN."

"SUNDAY MORNING, *July* 28, 1861.

"MY BELOVED FLOCK,—I am still a prisoner of the Lord, but happy under His wise and gracious government. You can sing:—

'The festal morn, my God, is come
That calls me to Thine honour'd dome,
To meet Thy saints once more;
My feet the summons shall attend,
With willing steps Thy courts ascend,
To worship and adore.'

And I can luxuriate in the promise that He will be a 'little sanctuary' to me.

"This week will be a week of singular importance to you as a church. On Friday you are to meet to elect a co-pastor. How this was done in primitive times the Acts of the Apostles shew. 'As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul to the work whereunto I have appointed them.' The spirit of the church was solemn, devout, prayerful. They sought the Lord, and He answered them. Let that be your spirit. If possible, set apart some special time for united prayer for this great business; and He who rules the affairs of His Church, and appoints His servants where to labour, will direct and bless you in your election.—I am, your affectionate pastor, "J. SHERMAN."

"SUNDAY MORNING, *August* 4, 1861.

"MY BELOVED FLOCK,—My health seems much the same as last Sabbath. I do not think disease has gained power; but the exhaustion of weakness reduces me often very low, and renders me incapable of effort. But nothing shuts out the light of heaven, or interrupts fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, except sin. Holiness, my beloved people, will qualify you for seeing the Lord now by faith, and in His glory in a brighter world. Walk in that path—nothing can harm you. By your election, I am very happy to call Mr Beazley my co-pastor. May the union, both to you and to me, be productive of spiritual harmony and holy joy, and many souls through it be added to the Lord!—I am, my beloved flock, your senior pastor,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

"*October* 13, 1861.

"MY BELOVED FLOCK,—A happy Sabbath-day to you! May you be in the Spirit on the Lord's-day, and so ready to welcome the Lord's message, and profit by it, and to worship Him with faith and love! If it were my Master's will, I could wish to be among you; but He knows what is best for me, and keeps me as His prisoner. My sufferings are often great, occasioning great prostration of body and mind; yet the God of patience proportions my strength to my day. Let me still share your prayers, as I am sure you do mine. And, above all, let us thirst and labour to be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.—I am, your affectionate pastor, "J. SHERMAN."

"BLACKHEATH, *October* 27, 1861.

"MY BELOVED FLOCK,—'Oh that it were well with me as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shone on my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness!' But now it pleases my heavenly Guide that I should walk in darkness, with only a glimmer of light now and then. The oppression and acute suffering of the body, I doubt not, depress my spirit, and cause me to forget many consolations adapted to my state. 'Have pity upon me, O ye my friends; have pity upon me: for the hand of the Lord hath touched me.' Pray that those Divine and all-supporting arms which, through many years of my pilgrimage, have held me up, may not be withdrawn; and that that loving countenance which has gladdened my darkest hours may yet prove the health of my countenance. I believe what I think the Comforter has declared to me, that at even-time it shall be light; but I want grace and confidence while passing through the dark valley to say, 'God is my refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble: therefore will I not fear.'

"Oh, ye who put off religion to a dying hour, let me assure you from what I feel, that the thoughts are so engaged, when you can think at all, with pain and sad reflections on the past, that literally neither time nor strength are left for the search after God and heaven.—I am, your suffering, but affectionate pastor,

"JAMES SHERMAN."

CHAPTER IV.

MR SHERMAN'S death produced a deep and wide-spread sorrow. Resolutions of respect and gratitude were adopted, not only by the churches at Surrey Chapel and Blackheath, but by most of the public societies connected with Nonconformity, which at one time or other he had effectually served; their unusual number and fervour attesting the affection in which he was held. And throughout the kingdom many mourned his loss, for many "owed their own selves to him." In forwarding the address from Surrey Chapel, Mr Hall writes:—

"TO J. WESTRAN SHERMAN, ESQ.

"*March* 4, 1862.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have a melancholy pleasure in enclosing a memorandum entered on our minutes, and read last night at the prayer-meeting; all hands being eagerly and lovingly held up in approval. It must be a great satisfaction to know that, after six years' retirement, the people among whom your father lived so long, and who had such opportunities of judging of his character, still retain sentiments of such deep respect and cordial affection. This has always given me great satisfaction to witness; and should God permit *me* to labour there eighteen years, I hope that at the close of so long a period I may enjoy to an equal degree the love and confidence cherished towards my departed friend, your honoured father.

"Please present our united very kind regards to Mrs Sher-

man; and praying that you may both enjoy unceasingly that strength for duty and trial, that peace and joy under all circumstances, and, when it comes, that victory over death which are secured through faith in that Saviour to preach whom your father's life was devoted.—Believe me to remain, my dear sir, very faithfully yours,

"NEWMAN HALL."

He was buried at Abney Park Cemetery, on the 22d of February, after a funeral service in the chapel at Blackheath. The devotional services in the chapel were conducted by the Rev. J. Beazley and Henry Allon, and the funeral oration was delivered by the Rev. Newman Hall, LL.B. The service at the grave was conducted by Mr Hall and Mr Beazley. A great concourse of people "followed him to his burial, making great lamentation for him." More than one who stood around his grave were heard to declare that to him they owed all that they had in life. "The blessing of those ready to perish came upon him." On the day following, funeral sermons were preached in the chapel at Blackheath, by the Rev. Henry Allon in the morning, and by the Rev. J. Beazley in the evening· the morning sermon being repeated in the evening to the church in Surrey Chapel; and afterwards, at their request, to the students of Cheshunt College, in the college chapel. The text was chosen by Mr Sherman himself, and was very characteristic of both his humility and his evangelical sympathies. It was 1 Tim. i. 14, "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

Mr Sherman's character neither requires nor admits of elaborate or formal analysis. Its distinctive features will have been abundantly apparent from the preceding autobiography, and the details of his labours. All, therefore, that it is necessary to add is supplied by the following reminiscences, kindly furnished to me by his life-long friend, Joseph Payne, Esq., Assistant-Judge, and by two or three extracts from the funeral services, which I may be permitted to make:—

"Westhill, Highgate, *Dec.* 13, 1862.

"My personal acquaintance with Mr Sherman commenced when we were students—he of Cheshunt College, and I of the University of Oxford. He used to come to town occasionally, and sometimes dined at my father's house. We used to walk together about the streets of London; and if, as now and then happened, we found a church open on the week-day, we made a point of entering; and by this means we had the privilege of hearing two of the most popular preachers in the Establishment—one in the decline of his life, the Rev. Charles Simeon of Cambridge, and the other in the vigour of his youth, the Rev. Hugh M'Neile, just then arrived from Ireland. Each sermon was characteristic of its author, and we considered both as first-rate. The first time I heard Mr Sherman preach was when he looked quite a boy, and his appearance created much interest. It was in the Rev. Mr Stodhart's chapel, in Pell Street, Ratcliffe Highway. His text was from Matt. xv. 28, 'O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt.' It was well arranged and well delivered, and, as far as I could ascertain,

much and deservedly admired. I also heard him, about the same time, preach a collection sermon in the same place. I forget the subject, but I well remember that he concluded with an appeal to *all classes* to contribute; ingeniously reminding them of the people of old, who were said to have brought into the treasury 'gold and silver and brass.' After this I heard him preach occasionally, but I do not remember anything very particular. When he went to Reading, I lost sight of him altogether, though my mother, who was a great friend of his, kept up the connexion, and sometimes visited him there. On the occasion of his marriage to the first Mrs Sherman, I made one of my earliest efforts in the art of writing verses. I congratulated him upon his *wisdom* in bringing his wife from a distance, and not selecting one from the midst of his own congregation. I also expressed my satisfaction that he had done it speedily, as I thought it would tend to settle the minds of his hearers, and that mothers would cease to look upon him as an eligible son-in-law, and young ladies would get rid of their palpitations, and unite in shewing kindness to the stranger. As I did not go to Reading at all, I must pass over the time which elapsed before his settlement at Surrey, as successor to the Rev. Rowland Hill. One evening, just after that, having been holding an inquest for my brother, the Coroner, at one of the Borough hospitals, on my way to the Temple, I turned in to the chapel and heard my old friend preach, after a very long interval. He appeared to me to be thin, and his voice, I thought, was not strong. I knew that he was a stanch teetotaller, and was therefore somewhat surprised to hear him give out for his text, 'Take us the foxes, the little foxes

that *spoil the vines;* for our vines have tender grapes.' Feeling an interest in his welfare, I again addressed him in verse, and expressed my fears that he was injuring his constitution by his total abstinence, but comforted myself with the notion that the practice would wear out *itself* before it had worn out *him*, and concluded my lines with the philosophic maxim—

'That nothing violent is everlasting.'

Some time after this, finding his health much improved, I wrote to him, recanting my former sentiments, in some lines which he was very fond of shewing to his brother-abstainers. I remember only the commencement, which was as follows:—

'Heed not the lay I wrote to thee,
My kind and valued friend,
Nor to my hints of injury,
From abstinence attend.
Taught by thy *practice*, I confess
My *theory* has fail'd;
And nobly, against *lawfulness*
Experience has prevail'd!'

While he was at Surrey Chapel, I renewed my intimacy with him, and, though I did not attend his ministry, I assisted him at his various meetings,—Bible, Missionary, Sunday School, Ragged School, Tract Society, &c.,—and spent many profitable evenings, and formed many pleasant connexions with such devoted men as Mr Williams and Mr Moffat, the missionaries, the Malagashes, and many others. His social parties were always cheerful; for my friend was a merry man, but it was, as the poet says,

'Within the limits of becoming mirth.'

And no man of my acquaintance enjoyed more than he did a witticism, however sharp, or a pun, however pungent, 'provided always,' as the lawyers have it, there was not anything ill-natured in their composition.

"With respect to his style of preaching, it was clear, earnest, and affectionate; and this latter quality it was which made him such a favourite with, as well as so useful to the young. In some of his sermons there were passages of a very high order. One in particular I remember, from the text 'This man hath done nothing amiss.'

"There was nothing approaching to vulgarity or levity in his discourses; which, considering that his early days were spent in hearing Mr Latchford, of Bartholomew Close celebrity, is a matter somewhat remarkable. That singular, though I believe good man, had a very odd way of commencing his sermons—I suppose to attract attention. On one occasion, having given out his text, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?' he began thus:—'Lather away, my boys, lather away, my boys; you may *soap* him, and soap him, and soap him, and *scrub* him, and scrub him, and scrub him, but you can't get him clean; lather away, my boys.' On another occasion, when his subject was the man lying at the pool of Bethesda, he commenced by wriggling his shoulders, and saying—'I tell you what, my friends, if you and I had lain so long without having our beds made, I think we should have felt rather uncomfortable.' On a third occasion, he leaned right over the pulpit and said to his hearers, 'My friends, I cannot stand to address you; I am obliged to hang across the cushion, for, like poor Mephibosheth, I am lame in both my feet.' But, notwithstanding these peculiarities, when he got warm with his subject, he

would pour out a stream of devotional and doctrinal eloquence which was very striking. My friend Mr Sherman, in seeking 'instruction in righteousness,' seems to have made a happy selection—gathering the good into his vessel, and casting the bad away.

"For the reasons I have before mentioned, I saw but little of the first Mrs Sherman; but the second I knew very well, and very highly esteemed. My opinion of her is recorded in the account which I gave of her funeral, in the Life which was published by her bereaved husband.

"There was one event of a peculiar character which occurred at Surrey Chapel, and in which I took a part. It was the presentation to Mrs Harriet Beecher Stowe, when Mr Sherman's guest, of an allegorical inkstand by the adult congregation, and a simple gold pen by the juvenile members.

"But the 'short account' which I was requested to give of my personal recollections has grown to an unreasonable length. I will, therefore, only add, that my friendship for Mr Sherman continued unabated during the remainder of his stay at Surrey Chapel; that it journeyed with him to Blackheath, and tarried with him there until the last; and that my opinion of his usefulness as a minister, and the attachment of his different congregations to him, may be fitly expressed in the words of an anonymous writer on the death of King George the Third:—

> 'His people's hearts are his funeral urn,
> And, should sculpture be denied him,
> *There* will his name be found, when, in turn,
> They lay their heads beside him!'

"JOSEPH PAYNE."

"This congregation," says Mr Hall, in his funeral oration, "has lost the pastor, who, in his later years, brought forth the fruits of youth, gathering together a vast concourse, to whom he preached with the energy of his earlier days, establishing a prosperous church in a new locality, animating them in all works of faith and labours of love; to the very end his heart bent on enlarging the philanthropic capacities of the material structure, and especially on building up living stones into the spiritual temple of which Christ is the corner-stone. He will no longer preside in your assemblies, and stimulate you in good works; he will no longer, in yonder vestry, counsel the perplexed, and receive avowals of faith from those who desire to confess Christ; he will no longer, at the table of the Lord, celebrate with you the feast of love; nor, with tones trembling with emotion, lead your supplications; nor from this pulpit will his voice again be heard, warning the careless, encouraging the penitent, inviting to the Good Shepherd the sheep that have strayed—counselling, instructing, consoling those that are within the fold!

"Another congregation mourn not less than this, to whom his services, though not so recent, were much longer continued, and on a larger scale. Matured by the experience of a former pastorate, during eighteen years he toiled as the successor of Rowland Hill, spending the prime of his days, and prematurely hastening on the infirmities of age, by labours more abundant, not only amidst the teeming population of his immediate charge, but in ministering the word of life throughout the kingdom. How fondly at Surrey Chapel is his memory cherished! What numbers there are the fruits of his ministry—his spiritual children in Christ Jesus! How did he endear himself to all by his ready

sympathy, his unfailing tenderness, his untiring zeal! How welcome were his occasional visits since his pastorship ceased, and what multitudes of loving faces and eager hands besieged him when the service was over! Who there, as here, does not feel he has lost a friend?

"The Church at large must lament. A standard-bearer has fallen. In his own peculiar style of preaching he has, perhaps, never been surpassed, and no one in our day has been more honoured as God's instrument in the conversion of immortal souls. Not carried about by diverse and strange doctrines, he determined to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Whenever he preached, he strove to exalt the Saviour, and to win souls to Him. There was no effort to surprise or to dazzle; but looks and tones of pre-eminent tenderness won their way to the coldest heart, and, through the affections, captured the intellect of the wise, as well as of the unwise. As a preacher—

> 'I would express him simple, grave, sincere,
> In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,
> And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,
> And natural in gesture; much impress'd
> Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
> And anxious mainly that the flock he fed
> Might feel it too; affectionate in look
> And tender in address, as well became
> A messenger of grace to guilty men!'

"Such a messenger of grace was he; and, during nearly fifty years, made full proof of his ministry. I will not speak further of his public life or private character; nor will I refer to his long illness, the patience with which it was borne, the divine peace with which it was solaced. These topics will, no doubt, be referred to by my esteemed friend

who will preach the funeral sermon, and who, during many years, enjoyed much familiar intercourse with him. I will only add my personal tribute of grateful affection. I can never forget his kindness to the mere boy at college—how he encouraged him at a time when a word of sympathy was more precious than gold—what interest he manifested in his first introduction to the churches—and how he left a home of affliction to officiate at the marriage of him who now reciprocates, by his own request, and takes this service at his funeral. Above all, I am reminded of the open-hearted generosity, as rare in the world, if not in the Church, as it was habitual with himself, at the time he resigned Surrey Chapel, and how, having promoted the present minister's settlement, there was no one who more cordially rejoiced in every token given him of affection and success, even as the abiding and deep love manifested to the pastor who had left them was a delight for the new pastor to witness, and an encouragement to labour among a people whose attachments were so sincere and abiding.

"What multitudes, besides the speaker, could tell of acts of kindness, of proofs of generous sympathy! Has he not passed away, with the affectionate regrets of all who knew him?"*

That he may avoid needless striving after diversified phrase in expressing his estimate of Mr Sherman, the writer may be permitted to quote here the following paragraphs from the funeral sermon, and from an obituary notice contributed by him to the *Patriot* newspaper:—

* Funeral Services occasioned by the Death of the late Rev. James Sherman. Ward & Co, London.

"The first thing that would strike a stranger, on becoming acquainted with Mr Sherman, was the bright joyousness and hopefulness of his temperament. Wherever he came, his presence was a sunshine. The goodness of some men awes you; it stands and trembles before God. Mr Sherman's goodness charmed you; it rejoiced before God, and rested in His love and smile, awakening within you a desire to participate in its happiness. He had many anxieties in life, and some very bitter sorrows; but they could not extinguish the light that was in his eye, nor efface the smile that was upon his countenance. His sympathies were with the bright things of life; his heart was green to the very last. Hence he sought and rejoiced in the love of those younger than himself.

"His social affections were very strong. He lived in the love of his family and friends. In no sense was he a self-contained man—cold, reserved, or self-sufficient. The tendrils of his affections ever sought for something to lay hold upon. To love, and to be loved, were the necessities of his social being. Hence the peculiar severity of the successive strokes that 'barked his fig-tree, and laid his vine waste;' that twice smote down by his side the wife of his bosom; that bereft him of his children, until 'his house was left unto him desolate.'

"Indeed, the intensity of the emotional part of his nature was his constitutional characteristic; and to this, sanctified by 'the grace of our Lord,' his peculiar religious fervour, both in the pulpit and out of it, was, no doubt, to be attributed. Differences of fervour are not necessarily to be ascribed to differences of either goodness or zeal. Hence,

too, the quick resentment of which he was capable, the sudden flush, the hasty word, that are inseparable from such a temperament.

"The fervency of his spiritual feeling manifested itself in his ready sympathy with every religious movement that promised spiritual usefulness. Intent upon the salvation of men, he was ready to sanction, or to adopt any lawful means that seemed likely to secure it. He was not afraid of novelties. He had no narrow clinging to church-traditions. Although the most decorous of men, he was not over-careful about ritual proprieties, when occasion demanded that they should be disregarded. He was always amongst the first to sanction and try experiments.

"No one could doubt the genuine religious earnestness of his life. Although the most cheerful of social companions. —a religious allusion—the manifestation of a spiritual sympathy, the expression of a zealous purpose, at once enkindled his enthusiasm. Whatever the mood of his social feeling, a holy thing elicited an instant and hearty response. He was 'instant in season, out of season,' 'ready to every good word and work.' He was never 'ashamed of the gospel of Christ.' Piety was more than the attribute of his life; it was its temper and principle, the foundation and essence of his life itself. 'Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably he behaved himself among you that believe.'

"His ministerial aims were attested by his sermons. Not only did he select such themes as were fullest of evangelical truths, but he turned every topic to evangelical applications. Like the great apostle himself, he was not always careful to maintain logical sequence, when the Master or His claims

had to be spoken of. 'The love of Christ constrained him.'

"His theology was of the moderate Calvinistic school. And he was never more fervid than when he spake of the love of God, and of Christ, or of the blessedness and reward of them that believe.

"Partly from constitutional, partly from moral reasons, he shrank, with an instinctive repugnance, from theological novelties; not as condemning theological speculation in others, but as contented himself with such fundamental truths as sufficed for his aims in the pulpit.

"His Christian charities were very large. Neither doctrinally, ecclesiastically, nor ritually did he hold any extreme views. He had a warm and ready sympathy with whatever was good. He was 'a lover of all good men.' His tastes and convictions led him to prefer a worship more liturgical than has been common among Nonconformists. He magnified the devotions of the church, and ever sought to enrich them with all that is excellent, both in music and ritual. But he was contented that every church should determine this for itself. He accepted, conscientiously, whatever was 'for edifying.'

"His catholic sympathies won him many friends in church-circles other than his own. A loving message to him, when on his death-bed, sent by the venerable and saintly Archbishop of Canterbury,* indicates the respect in which he was held.

"Favoured by Providence with affluent means, he was full of large-hearted liberality. He valued property, he attached

* Dr Sumner, who has since also "finished his course."

importance to ministerial income, but it was that he 'might have to give to him that needeth.' His hand was as the hand of charity herself. His acknowledgment of the slightest service was munificent. Many an act of sympathising generosity have I witnessed or become acquainted with. Almost my first impression of him was my unsuspected knowledge, when a student, of an act of quiet beneficence. Many a student at Cheshunt has he enabled to pass through his college course. His 'liberal heart devised liberal things.'

"To the college at Cheshunt he was a warm-hearted and unwearied friend. His love to it was enkindled during his student life, and knew neither intermission nor change. He took a paternal interest in its students, and in various ways, and above most of the helpers that it has had, he promoted its interests.

"He was, however, chiefly known, and will be chiefly remembered, as a successful preacher. Since Whitefield's celebrated sermon in Moorfields, perhaps no such effects have been produced as by some of his sermons. Rarely did he preach without some ascertained conversions, and sometimes they were numbered by scores. To one sermon alone, preached in Surrey Chapel in 1837, eighty-four persons, who joined the church there, attributed their conversion; how many more, who sought communion elsewhere, cannot be told. 'He was full of faith and power, and he did great wonders and miracles among the people.'

"That his ministry was the glory of his life, no one who knew Mr Sherman could doubt. No one could think more highly of his work, or more holily magnify his office. No one could feel more grateful for the grace that had 'counted

him faithful, putting him into the ministry,' or be more humbled in the recognition of it. Who that saw him in the pulpit—his energy—his enthusiasm—his look of almost rapture as he set forth the salvation that is in Christ, could doubt that he was doing a work in which he gloried more than he could have gloried in leading a senate, or in ruling a kingdom?

"Assuredly no feeling qualified his enthusiasm save the feeling of astonished humility that he, so unworthy, should be chosen—that he, so feeble, should be made successful in a work so divine."

"Mr Sherman's preaching was eminently the utterance of strong convictions. His intellect, indeed, was not speculative. He knew but little of that feverish inquisitiveness after the reasons of things, which, if it be to some a blessing, is to more a bane. He fought no terrible battles with the demon of doubt. Perhaps he did not always see the difficulties that were; or if he knew that there were depths beneath where he stood, he was contented to leave their dim perilous sounding to others, or to God's revelation hereafter. The bent of his mind was eminently practical. He looked upon nothing on its metaphysical side. He could contentedly and healthily turn away from the inscrutable. He was satisfied with truth that he could *use*. He could rest his faith upon his own spiritual experience, and upon the proved power of the gospel, in the practical effects upon others which his preaching of it produced.

"Hence he preached with a simplicity of belief which in itself was a power. No *peradventure* qualified his strong assertions. He spake as one who manifestly and passionately

believed. And such preaching produced its wonted effects. His faith 'removed mountains.' Men the most unlikely were converted under his ministry, and 'the Lord added daily to the church the saved.'"

"Emphatically was emotional sympathy the characteristic of Mr Sherman's preaching. If it had to be designated by a single epithet, all would agree in applying to it one that should express the intense feeling that permeated it. In this it was almost peerless: an indefinable sensibility suffused every sermon, a strong contagious emotion, that penetrated and subdued all hearts; voice, manner, urgency, pathos, all conduced to this effect of it. It was said of some one, that 'there was a tear in the tone of his voice;' it might have been said of Mr Sherman. Even common words, which would have fallen coldly from other lips, had a melting power as uttered by him. You could not always account for it. You sometimes felt as if the emotion could hardly be justified; nor could it, perhaps, to the understanding. It was the mystic sympathy of emotion—heart speaking to heart; 'unction' is the only word that describes it—the unction that John speaks of, 'that teacheth all things.'

"Mr Sherman did not, as some preachers do, hinder emotion by laboured discussions or minute analyses in his sermons; nor was he, like others, ashamed of emotion, resolutely subduing the expression of it. Rather did he make everything conduce to it. Like the Master, he would weep over guilty men. Like the apostle, he would beseech them with tears. He summoned all the deep sympathies of his

soul to give effect to his preaching. It was urgent and passionate—an entreaty of unspeakable love." *

"Mr Sherman was emphatically and distinctively a popular preacher, and with an individuality that distinguished him from the men whose names we have mentioned. [Hamilton, Ely, M'All, Fletcher, Jay, James, Harris, Sortain,—his contemporaries.] With less of originality and of intellectual strength than perhaps any of them, he was, as a preacher, more effective and more successful than they all. The pulpit was his place of power, and since Whitefield perhaps no man amongst us has achieved so much in it. Many have surpassed him in eloquence, many in learning, many in force and freshness of thought, but scarcely any in usefulness. His popularity was very great. Through the forty years of his ministry, and even to the last, wherever he preached, thronging crowds attested the attraction of his name and the spell of his power. What other man could be named who, retiring from a laborious pastorate at sixty years of age, and with enfeebled strength, could in three or four years gather a congregation of a thousand people, and organise a church of wealth, and power, and usefulness such as those which remain his monument at Blackheath?

"We do not believe in the cynical theory that, under favourable circumstances, feebleness and folly will suffice for popularity. Popular men may say and do foolish things; but no man ever yet gained popular suffrages, much less kept them, without corresponding elements of power. It

* Funeral Services occasioned by the Death of the late Rev. James Sherman. Ward & Co., London.

may not be the objector's ideal of power; but is not the question fairly an open one, whether he has any right to select an arbitrary standard of excellence and say, 'This and no other shall be the condition of legitimate success?' If a man fail of success, it is because he is deficient in some element of power essential to it. His thought may be clear and strong, but he may lack the art of putting it clearly and forcibly; or he may lack warm sympathies and practical earnestness; or, having these, he may fail to do justice to them by his intellectual faultiness or feebleness. Mr Sherman had not the lofty rhetoric of M'All, nor the intellectual beauty and fervour of Harris, nor the massive force of Angell James, nor the sententious wisdom of Jay, nor the classical brilliancy of Sortain, nor the thrilling passion of James Parsons,—happily still spared to us; but he had a pervading unction, a sympathetic tenderness, a contagious sensibility that were peculiarly his own. His sermons were suffused with a feeling that overpowered all indifference and even all criticism. They were sometimes defective in taste, often disfigured with incongruous metaphors and meretricious ornament, but they always excited religious emotion and hallowed it. Criticism was rarely simultaneous with the utterance of the incongruity; it was rather the result of after reflection when the sermon was over and the spell was removed. And we know no higher test of effective preaching than that devout feeling and religious purpose should be so excited, as for the moment to suspend and overpower all critical faculty. The structure of Mr Sherman's sermons, moreover, was always good and strong; he took a vigorous grasp of his subject; if they were defective in taste, they

never were in power. We never missed an opportunity of hearing him, simply because it did us good, because we could submit our heart to the inspiration of his spiritual fervour and sympathies. We need not say that his preaching was thoroughly evangelical: only the great vital truths of the gospel could so have inspired the preacher, or so have affected his hearers. Others may have excelled him in the wise and effective culture of the varied spiritual life of a church, but in the conversion of sinners and in the preaching of the truth that commonly converts men he was unrivalled.

"Mr Sherman was one of the men whose ministry has made the evangelical churches of Nonconformity a power in the land and in the world—the power that won the triumphs of early Methodism in both its branches; that gave its magic spell to the preaching of Whitefield and Wesley and their followers; and that is the strength of modern Nonconformity without the Establishment, and of the Evangelical party within it. At no period has Nonconformity been able to compete with the Establishment in numbers, or in wealth, or in social as distinguished from religious influence. No one thinks of claiming for the 'Low Church' clergy superiority in intellect, or learning, or moral goodness over their rivals. These maintain their ground and multiply their numbers solely by the power of their evangelic preaching. So divine a thing is the gospel of Christ, that the feeblest preaching of it is more than a match for the strongest preaching of other things; because above all other things it satisfies men's religious need, and lays hold of their religious sympathies. Evangelical preachers give full, unstinted utter-

ance to the fundamental truths of salvation. They 'know nothing amongst men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.' They permit neither intellectual subtleties, nor ecclesiastical pretensions, nor ritual preferences to hide or qualify this. It may be a 'stumblingblock' to our modern Jew, 'foolishness' to our modern Greek; but, now as ever, it is 'to them that believe, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.' We may often wish for more intellectual force in their reasoning, for more critical discrimination in their exegesis, for more literary culture in their compositions. We believe that, so far from impairing, these would greatly augment the power of their preaching; but, as the alternatives of their evangelistic truths, even these were utterly without power. No forces in men, no convictions of judgment, no fervours of imagination, no ethical recognitions are so strong as their religious emotions, and nothing so appeals to religious emotion as the preaching of the Cross. Therefore it is that preachers like Mr Sherman are so effective: their great aim is to awaken religious emotion, and they grasp only the kind of truth and the degree of truth the best adapted for this.

"We earnestly trust, therefore, that, as heretofore so henceforth, this will be the paramount aim and reliance of our preachers—by a constant preaching of fundamental truth, and by an overpowering and contagious emotion, to arouse men's religious sympathies, and so win them to Christ. In this respect we do not hesitate to hold up Mr Sherman's ministry as the one from which, above all that we have known, the true secret of ministerial power and success may be learnt."*

* *Patriot* newspaper, Feb. 20, 1862.

This is the one great lesson of his life—that goodness and usefulness do not depend upon the doing of extraordinary things, but upon the doing of common things extraordinarily well,—upon piety, simplicity, consecration, a service in the spirit of the Master's life—a self-sacrifice in the spirit of the Master's passion. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him."

A tablet in Surrey Chapel bears the following inscription:—

ERECTED BY THE CONGREGATION

IN MEMORY OF THEIR FORMER PASTOR,

THE REV. JAMES SHERMAN.

WITH PERSUASIVE EARNESTNESS,

AND HONOURED BY HIS DIVINE MASTER WITH GREAT USEFULNESS,

HE MINISTERED IN SURREY CHAPEL,

AS THE SUCCESSOR OF THE REV. ROWLAND HILL,

FROM 1836 TO 1854,

AND ENTERED INTO THE JOY OF HIS LORD, 15TH FEBRUARY 1862,

AGED 66 YEARS.

"*THEY THAT TURN MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL SHINE AS THE STARS FOR EVER AND EVER.*"—DAN. xii. 3.

Another memorial of him is a bursary for poor students in Cheshunt College, subscribed by friends who loved him, and who knew his love for the college, and the warm and benevolent interest that he took in this class of its students; and who, therefore, have sought to perpetuate his name in connexion with it in a way that will bring upon him the blessings of future generations.

But his chief record is in the hearts of those to whom he ministered, and especially of such of them as his earnest, persuasive words led to the Saviour—an imperishable record, "written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart,"—a record that shall endure when marble monuments are mouldered into dust, and that shall have its witnessing and rejoicing place before the throne of God and the Lamb. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

THE END.

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